the ALTERNATIVE: AN AMERICAN SPECTATOR

Two Appreciations of Friedrich A. Hayek

by James Grant and Ralph Raico

Abolish "Reform"

by James Q. Wilson

Vietnam Falsehoods

by Peter J. Rusthoven

The Limits of Social Science

by A. Lawrence Chickering

Holmes, Sweet Holmes

by William Murchison

May 1975 • Volume 8, Number 8 • Price (.40)

The Continuing Crisis

■ March! And the furious debate continues throughout North Texas and Oklahoma over why some scapegrace absconded with the blood, the sexual organs, the ears, and the lips of Mr. J.R. Allison's six-hundred-pound bull. The animal is practically useless without them, and what possible utility could they have when not attached to their life-long companion? Mr. John Dunn, president of the Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, holds that it was the work of a local Satan cult, but Mr. Don King, general manager of the Texas and Southwestern Cattle Raisers Association, scoffs at Mr. Dunn's hypothesis, for the region is fairly conservative, and without benefit of a major university. One theory, as yet to be probed, is that local Democrats, dissatisfied with the present sorry field of Presidential candidates, are constructing the ideal Presidential candidate at an undisclosed site.

■ Meanwhile back on the banks of the Potomac at Hollywood East, congressional rhetoric is even more elevated. During stertorous meetings of the Senate Budget Committee, now devoted to analyzing Fed Chairman Arthur Burns' testimony regarding a possible one hundred billion dollar budgetary deficit, Florida's Senator Lawton Chiles shuffles about, distributing "Jesus Saves" tracts to fellow solons, and discoursing on the probable state of housing in the hereafter. On the Senate floor Mike Gravel, the senior Senator from Seward's Folly, sedulously promotes the visionary cause of transcendental meditation, going so far as to introduce legislation making the second week of November "public awareness" week and launching profundities such as "Transcendental meditation is, in my own experience, a profoundly pragmatic means of integrating the welter of experiences which impinge on us everyday [sic and haw, haw]...." And finally, as Communist rockets continue to maim and to slaughter Cambodian civilians, the 94th Congress, Washington's hotbed of humanitarianism, is becoming imperturbably frugal. For as Senator Mike Mansfield paralogistically states, he is "sick and tired of seeing Indochinese men, women, and children being slaughtered by American guns with American ammunition."

■ Certainly as the month draws to a close it is apparent that President Ford's sought-after aid increase to South Vietnam will not pass Congress, not only because of Congress' sudden thrift, but also because the North Vietnamese are showing such scrupulous regard for the Paris Peace Agreement. Needless to say all Washington was astonished when the Thieu regime withdrew from the central highlands, but congressional doves were even more astonished at the behavior of local peasants, who in their simple ignorance spurned imminent liberation, left their dearest possessions, and entered upon an hysterical flight for the protection of those regions still under the corrupt Thieu regime. Either the peasants do not realize that Communist governments bring reform, efficiency, and the kind of environmental cleanliness that sets Western journalists aflutter, or there were more greedy capitalists living in rural South Vietnam than even I.F. Stone had estimated!

■ At any rate, while the oncoming North Vietnamese good-government advocates slaughter and imprison refugees, all those bombastic Capitol Hill moralizers of yesteryear have fallen strangely silent, distracted as they are by the new priorities of economizing, paring down the powers of the Presidency, turning the Central Intelligence Agency into a study group, and otherwise reversing policies that they had idealistically thumped for throughout the postwar era despite the know-nothing animadversions of people like Senator Robert A. Taft and the radical Right.

■ Mr. Guru Maharaj Ji's first-born is an eight-pound, eight-ounce girl, whom the seventeen-year-old "perfect master" has named Premlata, which translated from the original Hindi means, "Hey, you left your lights on." In New York City, masseuses are being coy about the causes of that fire which broke out at the Garden of Eden massage parlor, but police have not ruled out simple body friction. The Garden of Eden has a reputation for featuring some of the warmest massages in New York City, and health devotees have been known to come from as far as Baltimore. Americans got an indication of the variegated delights offered by the volunteer army when S. Sgt. Charles (Leather Belly) Chapman won the insect-eating contest highlighting the 1974 Survival Symposium at Camp Murray, Washington. In just three minutes 102 live big red ants tumbled to certain death down his esophagus, yet the champion remained percipient enough to record that "They have a sour almond taste." In Portland, Oregon, Dr. Peter Warner has filed a countersuit against his erstwhile patient Mr. James Asparro. Mr. Asparro's suit charges that Dr. Warner, a cross-eyed dentist, pulled the wrong tooth from Mr. Asparro's mouth. Now Dr. Warner is charging defamation of character and bad faith. And from Minneapolis comes an ominous report about government attempts to frustrate the legitimate scientific investigations of an assistant professor of business administration at Southwest State College, Mr. Thomas Lippert. Mr. Lippert, 25, and his assistant, Mr. Harold Ross, 21, were broadening the vistas of science with some remarkable "love experiments" on a Purdue University coed when federal agents interrupted their experiments and charged the two scientists with kidnapping.

■ But precisely how far we have progressed in our evolution toward the unlovely category of police state was suggested on March 12 when the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) pounced on Mr. Cameron Bishop and Mrs. Patricia Swinton, a mere six years after these renowned peace advocates were implicated in a series of high-minded bomb plots. What is more, the thousands of FBI agents prowling the country in pursuit of Miss Patty Hearst now seem intent not only on capturing her but also on sullying her good name by linking her with the demented ex-athletic director of Oberlin College, who had become such a nuisance in the Oberlin locker room that the college paid him $42,500 to vamoose, and with Mr. Bill (My Foot Hurts) Walton, the radical critic of capitalism, who signed a $2.5 million contract to play basketball and then eloped to the infirmary. But as if implicating Miss Hearst with a moron and a 6'11" fraud were not enough; she, an unmarried girl, is now suffering irreparable calumnies from an FBI-inspired transcontinental whispering campaign which alleges that the admittedly controversial coed is several months pregnant and residing in various "lesbian communes."

■ Despite the treacheries of America's secret police, the struggle for freedom and dignity continues. In Colorado four women legislators, noting that the women's restroom at the Colorado House of Representatives was ninety-six steps from the legislative chamber while the men's restroom was only five steps away, have argued successfully to have the men's restroom divided so it can be shared by both sexes. Inexplicably six of the thirteen women members of the House voted against the resolution. In Connecticut, Miss Judith Quist, a waitress, filed a sex discrimination suit against her former employers who had fired her when she refused to shave her legs, though no male waiters had been asked to shave their legs.

■ In New Jersey those twenty-eight Democratic state senators who barred their fellow Democratic senator, Miss Arlene S. Ammond, from the Democratic caucus when she persisted in reporting the caucus' confidential meetings to the press, will stand trial for sex discrimination. But a pall enshrouds the California court house of Judge Noel Cannon, the woman judge suspended by the California Commission on Judicial Qualifications for having a chihuahua on her lap and a mechanical canary trilling and chirping in the background while she held court. She is also accused of jailing defense lawyers and of threatening to perform a ".38 caliber vasectomy" on a policeman—a chilling case of institutionalized sexism.

■ In Denver Mr. Louis Ballast, the father of the cheeseburger, passed away, and a winged reptile the size of an F-4 fighter plane was found in Texas. Scientists are extremely interested in the discovery, for the flying reptile, were it alive today, would be very helpful in solving problems of mass transportation. Two illegal aliens were found working in the U.S. immigration office, and a white federal employee was ruled a victim of job discrimination. He worked in the Labor Department's Office of Equal Employment Opportunity.

■ Meanwhile throughout the nation it was politics as usual. Former Secretary of Com-

(continued on page 33)

Editor in Chief: R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.; **Publisher:** Baron Von Kannon of the Saturday Evening Club; **Circulation Manager:** Ronald E. Burr; **Managing Editor:** Adam Meyerson; **Assistant Managing Editor:** Joyce Goldberg; **Production Manager:** Martin E. Northway; **Senior Editors:** Terry Krieger, William Kristol, Rev. George Nathan; **Executive Secretary:** JoAnn Bradley; **Alien Contributors:** Eric Brodin, Carl Miller, Judy Tyrrell; **Art Advisor:** Elliott Banfield; **Associates:** David Brudnoy, Jameson G. Campaigne, Jr., D.W. Cooper, John R. Coyne, Jr., Peter Hughes, Alan Reynolds, Roger D. Tyrrell; **Art:** Gustave Doré, Fred Marshall; **Americana Editor:** P.D. Tyrrell; **Contributors:** Aram Bakshian, Jr., Frank W. Blatchford III, A. Lawrence Chickering, J.P. Duggan, John C. Elsbury, David Friedman, Jerry Gerde, Neil Howe, John Kelly, W. Wesley McDonald, Robert McTiernan, Gary North, Terry O'Rourke, Marc F. Plattner, G.W. Plunkitt, Peter J. Rusthoven, C. Bascom Slemp, Benjamin Stein, J. Whitney Stillman, David Tudor, Richard S. Wheeler, Timothy J. Wheeler.

the ALTERNATIVE: AN AMERICAN SPECTATOR

9	James Q. Wilson	Abolish "Reform"	9
10	James Grant	Hayek: The Road to Stockholm	10
12	William Murchison	Holmes, Sweet Holmes	12
16	Chester E. Finn, Jr.	A Federal Policy for Higher Education?	16
19	Tibor R. Machan	Demythologizing the Poor	19

Departments

2	The Continuing Crisis		2
4	Editorial	R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.	4
13	The Nation's Pulse	Peter J. Rusthoven	13
15	The Talkies	Benjamin Stein	15
21	A Libertarian's Basic Repertoire	Ralph Raico	21
26	Brudnoy's Film Index	David Brudnoy	26
31	The Bootblack Stand	George Washington Plunkitt	31
32	The Public Policy	Adam Meyerson	32
34	Current Wisdom	Assorted Jackasses	34

Reviews

5	A. Lawrence Chickering	*Obedience to Authority*	5
23	Peter J. Rusthoven	*Peace Is Not at Hand*	23
27	Kim Benston	*Black Fiction*	27
28	Terry Krieger	*Guilty Pleasures*	28
29	Angelo M. Codevilla	*The Genteel Populists*	29

Contributors

Kim Benston, just graduated from Yale, is finishing a book on Imamu Baraka... **David Brudnoy** is a Boston television commentator and a nationally syndicated columnist... **A. Lawrence Chickering,** Director of the Institute for Contemporary Studies in San Francisco, is writing a book on the problem of authority... **Angelo M. Codevilla,** author of *Modern France*, is Churchill Research Scholar at Claremont College... **Chester E. Finn, Jr.** works for the Government Studies Program of the Brookings Institution... **James Grant** has just joined the staff of *Barron's* Magazine... **Terry Krieger** is administrator of the Cultural Institutions Program of the National Endowment for the Humanities and senior editor of *The Alternative*... **Tibor R. Machan,** senior editor of *Reason*, teaches philosophy at SUNY College at Fredonia... **Adam Meyerson** is managing editor of *The Alternative*... **William Murchison** writes editorials for the *Dallas Morning News*... **Ralph Raico** teaches history at SUNY College at Buffalo and is active in the New York State Libertarian Party... **Peter J. Rusthoven,** a student at Harvard Law School, has just been elected an officer of the *Harvard Law Review*... **Benjamin Stein** lives and writes in New York City... **James Q. Wilson** is Henry Lee Shattuck Professor of Government at Harvard and a reformer (in the true sense of the word) of our criminal justice system. His latest book is *Political Organizations*.

The Alternative: An American Spectator *is published monthly except July and September at 102 West Sixth Street, Bloomington, Indiana. Application to mail at second class postage rates is pending at Bloomington, Indiana, and additional mailing offices.*

One-year subscriptions (ten issues) cost $6.00 and all correspondence (manuscripts, subscriptions, threatening letters, federal grants, etc.) should be sent to The Alternative, *P.O. Box 877, Bloomington, Indiana 47401.*

Microfilm editions of The Alternative *are available from Xerox University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, Michigan, and* The Alternative *is indexed by* Public Affairs Information Service Bulletin.

Published remarkably without regard to race, color, creed, or (most redundantly of all) national origin—and yes, sex, even sex.

Copyright The Alternative *magazine 1975. Volume 8, Number 8, May 1975.*

Editorial/R. Emmett Tyrrell, Jr.

Unsafe at Any Metabolic Rate

From Cambridge in the East to Berkeley in the West, and not excluding all the cow colleges in between, there are multitudinous colonies of apprehensive little men and women earnestly consuming the daily news, scowling, and wringing their hands over the worsening condition of the planet Earth. Though it makes some of them cringe and others become physically ill, they are all in a fever to know every fresh infamy committed by their fellow *Homo sapiens*—especially their fellow Amerikan *Homo sapiens*.

So they look to their local gazettes for headlines of calamity and decline. They rush to their television sets for the latest soap opera performances of the "evening news" and for fresh confirmation that Darwin was in error—it is not the fittest who have survived but the most inferior, and the most inferior are now hastening us along on a path to catastrophe. If ever they begin to lose this premonitory faith in mankind's imminent self-inflicted finale, they seek renewal in the anxious pages of the *Progressive*, the *Nation*, and the *New Republic*. They turn to National Public Radio, which they consider an educational experience, and some—those wishing to plumb the heart of our darkness—brave the *New York Review of Books*.

These are America's intellectualoids, at least they are mostly intellectualoids, and if their neurotic fears are merely transmogrifications of those uncertainties that every intelligent man has lived with and reflected upon since mankind's first stirrings in the Mesopotamian silt, that is little consolation to them. These fears are as closely related to their cerebral condition as flies are to a summer picnic; for it is the idiotic condition of the intellectualoid to remain forever gripped by that vast sense of limitless wonder that always emboldens the semi-educated, making him such an enormous pain to his betters, who put puerile awe behind them sometime during early adolescence. This infantile sense of wonder is what induces intellectualoids to ponder matters that are hopelessly beyond their meager intelligence and that leave them unhorsed and trembling from the experience. If a modern Galileo were to take pity on them and to explain to them that most of their fears are moonshine just as most of their wonder is ridiculous, he would be put down as an agent of Nixonian conspiracy or worse. The congenital oaf needs his fears; and, in every era, America has abounded with charlatans glad to minister to these needs.

Now in days of yore the charlatans had to conjure up delusions remote, exotic, and ominous to set an oaf to quavering. For instance, Bryan sold his snake oil with tales of Eastern Bankers and spirits from the nether regions. But today's charlatans have an easy time of it, for the intellectualoid is even more gullible than a Tennessee dirt farmer, and he is more numerous. Even now many of these intellectualoids are shuddering in deadly dread of things so commonplace as *Wonder Bread, bacon, sugar, prime grade beef, Coca Cola, table grapes, Gerber baby food desserts,* and three mystery substances, denominated by them as *Frute Brute, Breakfast Squares,* and *Pringles*.

Appalling? Amusing? Agreed, but typical of the genre; for over a decade now intellectualoids have been bombastically testing every American value and every American institution. No social, political, or philosophical matter has been too abstruse for their pretentious skepticism. And today, after this great pother of reassessment, the result of it is that intellectualoids all over the country are quaking in their sandals over the metaphysical possibilities of Coca Cola. They are terrorized by breakfast. Table grapes are to be treated circumspectly.

Today's intellectualoids have cultivated more fears than a medieval peasant. In fact they harbor so many fears that a pervasive and incorrigible craziness has overcome them, and they are now pressing their nostrums on all fronts. That is why we cannot dismiss their nutritional fears with guffaws and knee slaps. If recent history has taught us nothing else, it has taught us that what the oaf fears he outlaws, and with the oafs fearing everything from scientific experimentation to white bread, civilized man's liberties are in a tender condition.

If you doubt the intellectualoids' fury, consider the fervent testimony of an MIT microbiologist, the eminent Dr. Michael Jacobson, an organizer of the Center for Science in the Public Interest and a scientist in whom a yelp is struggling to be heard. Wonder Bread shall never touch his lips, nor shall Frute Brute besmirch him, for he is an intellectualoid with a mission. If he and his associates have their way America will be as free of Wonder Bread as Teaneck, New Jersey, was free of hooch from January 16, 1920, to December 5, 1933.

The aforementioned dangerous substances compose a list designated by Dr. Jacobson "The Terrible Ten," ten loathsome foods that fill every fastidious intellectualoid with fear. After reading Dr. Jacobson's learned treatise on them, even I was a bit wobbly, for it seems the gustatory arts, as practiced nowadays, are laced with exploitation, voodoo, and homicide. This at least is what consumer-conscious intellectualoids like Dr. Jacobson would have us believe, and it is instructive to consider their case.

Certainly the above list embraces a wide variety of foods, and Dr. Jacobson's literature notifies us that a wide assortment of evils issues from them. For instance some are poisonous, e.g. bacon and sugar. Others are American indulgences the continued use of which threatens international disequilibrium and personal spiritual damnation, e.g. prime grade beef. Pringles represents "the ultimate insult to the potato," a food known to the cognoscenti as "a terrific vegetable." Still others are exorbitantly priced and possibly serve as covers for the Central Intelligence Agency, e.g. Wonder Bread and Coca Cola. All in all one would have to admit that the Terrible Ten encompasses a veritable profusion of evil.

To address each complaint would be heavy labor and ridiculous labor at that. For there is, as mentioned earlier, a pervasive craziness about this business, and one sheds one's dignity when one rises to the dais to debate a loon. So let us consider that one evil characterizing every item on the list; in doing so one discovers not only the depth of our intellectualoids' fears but also the craziness that has overcome them and placed them beyond the pale.

What is it that commends Frute Brute to the Terrible Ten and not say Acapulco gold, tiger milk, or Vitamin C? After intense study of the works of Dr. Jacobson and other consumerist intellectualoids who share this obsession with foods, I think I have finally apprehended the complaint fundamental to all the foods listed amongst the ten. As they see it the problem with the Terrible Ten is that those who eat from it die! Oh one can ingest Wonder Bread with impunity for a few decades or so, but then the wraith cometh, and the only ones who have profited from the exchange are the tax collectors and the tycoons of Colonial Bakers, Inc.

As the consumerist intellectualoid sees it, death, just like child abuse, relative deprivation, and sexual inadequacy, does not have to happen. At least not until one has lived a life full of happiness, fulfillment, significance, and Scandinavian furniture, a life that is...well, a life that is the standards statistical life as extrapolated by intellectualoids in public interest think tanks. Now just as the standard statistical life is free from "pointless" work, material discomforts, psychological longings, and unsatisfactory sex, so too is it free from bowel cancer, heart disease, and inconvenient strokes. If the American citizenry abstains from the Terrible Ten it will move a giant step toward realizing the intellectualoids' dream of the standard statistical life. Of course other benefits will accrue. Migrant workers will be educated. Under-

(continued on page 35)

The Alternative: An American Spectator • May 1975 • Volume 8, Number 8

Special Book Review/A. Lawrence Chickering

Authority: Garbling the Issues

Advancements in knowledge about the social and psychological nature of man are tragically few and far between. Since the middle of the nineteenth century, the fashion has been to expect those advancements to come from the social sciences—from sociology, psychology, political science, and anthropology, among other disciplines. There was a time, before they thought they discovered scientific objectivity, when all of these disciplines in a university were in the philosophy department. Indeed, until not too long ago, a doctoral candidate in psychology at Harvard would have to defend his thesis before the entire philosophy department, which at various times included such figures as Alfred North Whitehead, William James, Josiah Royce, and George Santayana.

It was only in the mid-thirties that sociology, psychology, and the rest were certified by the philosophy of science to be separate departments, and philosophy was left with what many of the scientifically-minded regarded as the fever-swamps of either linguistic philosophy or metaphysics. Until only recently, these new social positivists have regarded philosophy as a quaint anachronism—curious as many think archaeology is curious, but of no practical value in an age of objectivity and "facts" to man's search for himself.

People may disagree about how much man's understanding of himself has advanced in this age of social science. Yet one can't help noticing the ironic coincidence—which may not be mere coincidence—that social and psychological disorder seem to be increasing, just as the potential for a "scientific understanding" of man seems greatest. Under the circumstances, we have excellent cause for wondering how much social science, cut off from philosophy, can *ever* tell us about man, and whether our reliance on an impossible objectivity is not itself caused by the philosophical and social currents that are undermining our political and social order.

Because the occasions are rare when social science *claims* for itself an important breakthrough in understanding, few opportunities are available to scrutinize both its theory and its practice—especially to appreciate its severe limitations. One recent occasion was presented in the publication of what has been billed as a seminal study of the problem of authority, by a psychologist with all the resources of a scientific laboratory at his disposal. The book, *Obedience to Authority,* by City University of New York Professor Stanley Milgram, has been celebrated almost universally (and in my view legitimately) by social scientists as social science at its best.

Obedience to Authority
by Stanley Milgram
Harper-Row $10.00

Unfortunately, while ***Obedience to Authority*** gives us social science at its best, it also gives us a vivid illustration of the weaknesses of a social science cut off from philosophy, and of the critical limitations in our intellectual discourse on the problem of authority. It is thus an enormously important book, both for its content, and especially for the response it provoked. It is perhaps most important as a symbol of our society's vulnerability to authoritarianism—not so much for what it says, as for what it does not say.

Obedience to Authority grew out of a series of experiments Milgram undertook at Yale in the early sixties, to study, as he put it, "when and how people...[will] defy authority in the face of a clear moral imperative."

To study the comparative effects of pain-infliction versus an authoritative command, Milgram recruited volunteers, ostensibly for a study of "memory and learning," from the adult, male, working population around New Haven. But the experiment was not really for a study of memory and learning. Indeed, the experimental situation itself is one of the most interesting and controversial aspects of the book, and several reviewers have accused Milgram of being a Hitler and a Strangelove for having contrived it.

By apparent luck of the draw, the volunteer ("subject") finds himself seated in front of an impressive electronic board, featuring a long row of buttons, designated with electrical currents going in 15-volt increments from 15 to 450 volts. To help him understand the point of it all, eight categories of shock intensity designate groups of buttons, going from "Slight Shock" at one end, to "Danger: Severe Shock" and "XXX" at the other.

A second "volunteer" ("learner"), apparently luckless in the draw but in fact part of the experimental team, sits in a chair, with an electrode attached to his wrist. Electrode paste is applied "to avoid blisters and burns."

In the "memory and learning" study, the "subject" asks questions of the "learner," and for every wrong answer he "punishes" the "learner" by giving him an electric shock, beginning at the minimum 15 volts and increasing the voltage 15 volts for each wrong answer, right up to 450. The authority is a laboratory technician, of impassive manner and stern appearance, clad in a grey technician's coat, who commands the "subject" to continue ("The experiment requires that you continue"), and when necessary assures him that "There is no permanent tissue damage."

The experiment begins, and with each wrong answer, the "subject" moves up the row of buttons. Here is Milgram's description of the "learner's" response: "At 75 volts, the 'learner' grunts. At 120 volts he complains verbally; at 150 he demands to be released from the experiment. His protests continue as the shocks escalate, growing increasingly

vehement and emotional. At 285 volts his response can only be described as an agonized scream." From 330 volts on, the "learner" makes no further sound. The responses are of course simulated—by the forty-seven-year-old accountant ("mild-mannered and likable") who played the "learner"-"victim"—but it is clear the "subjects," who at the start are given a real sample shock of 45 volts to reinforce the appearance of authenticity, believe it all.

Milgram's Results and Conclusions

This is the basic experimental situation, and Milgram goes through nearly twenty variations of it, moving the "learner" and technician around, introducing women, even in one variation moving the experiment to Bridgeport, away from Yale.

Before he began, Milgram asked his subjects how much electricity they themselves would be willing to take. Several said they would take no shock at all; most answers were substantially under 100 volts; and none went above 150. He also asked three groups (psychiatrists, college students, and middle-class adults) to predict their own break-off points—the points at which they would defy the authority. One psychiatrist and three middle-class adults predicted a break-off point of 300 volts, but they were conspicuous exceptions: the mean predictions of the three groups were 120 (psychiatrists), and 135 (both college students and middle-class adults).

The experimental results were quite different from these predictions. Between half and two-thirds of all "subjects" followed the authority and shocked the "learners" right up to the limit—to the full 450 volts. The remainder defied the authority at varying points along the scale, beginning at 150.

The results, quite simply, freaked out a lot of people, including many of Milgram's reviewers. Milgram and his Yale colleagues were stunned, participants were accused by their wives of being Eichmanns, and the *New York Times* reviewer said the experiment may have been permitted in the early sixties when we were insensitive to such things, but would never be funded now.

In considering Milgram's conclusions, it is important to keep in mind his own formulation about what he was doing, especially what the experiment would show: when and how people... [will] defy authority in the face of a clear moral imperative." This dichotomy—between authority and what he calls "inner moral qualities"—is the essential tension. With this formulation, it is hardly worth saying that throughout the book he is on the side of "inner moral qualities."

Milgram's conclusions follow those argued by Hannah Arendt about the "banality of evil," in her 1963 book about Eichmann. Here, he argues, is the fundamental lesson, now certified in the laboratory: "Ordinary people, simply doing their jobs, and without any particular hostility on their part, can become agents in a terrible destructive process. Moreover, even when the destructive effects of their work become patently clear, and they are asked to carry out actions incompatible with fundamental standards of morality, relatively few people have the resources needed to resist authority." Put another way, the subjects change from active moral agents to passive agents, yielding responsibility to external authority. And that is scary, particularly when the authority is Eichmann's boss.

Milgram's dichotomy—between authority and what he calls "inner moral qualities"—shunts aside the complicating issues that form the essence of the problem.

For recent examples of the process, he gives us Vietnam, but unfortunately the book appeared too early to be sure of the appropriate comments about Watergate.

Although in the final chapter, in a paragraph or two, and especially in a footnote which appears on the next to the last page, it is evident that Milgram is troubled by the simplicity of his analysis; his argument throughout the book tends toward blanket condemnation of authority and obedience, on behalf of "inner moral qualities." This argument offers the cleanest moral case and avoids the untidiness of complicating issues.

Unfortunately, it is the complicating issues that form the essence of the authority problem. Among those complicating issues are the terms and assumptions underlying our entire intellectual and moral consideration of the problem of authority.

What Can We Learn from Social Science?

By complicating issues I am not referring to the question of whether Milgram's research was ethical, a question which troubled many critics and which Milgram considers so important that he devoted ten pages in an appendix to discussing it. One problem concerns the extreme tension induced especially in subjects who continued administering shocks up to the limit. But I offer no conclusion here about the ethical question other than to take note of it. The experiment *was* done under false pretenses, and the fact that the great bulk of volunteers expressed gratitude for the experience seems beside the point. (Almost none were sorry for having participated.) Whatever the value of the experiment, it is difficult to avoid noting the irony that while Milgram deplores the authority that science and scientific trappings had for the great majority of his subjects, he uses that same authority to justify what many believe to be his unethical research methods.

By complicating issues, I am referring rather to the issues generally ignored by those many observers who share the opinion of social psychologist Roger Brown, given on the book jacket, that Milgram's experiments are "the most important social psychological research done in this generation." Social science, and social psychology in particular, is often criticized for merely cloaking common sense in scientific or pseudo-scientific jargon, but Milgram's findings violated, or seemed to violate, all our preconceived ideas on obedience and disobedience to authority. Although Milgram tried to dramatize the extent of surprise by asking for predictions about what would happen and by framing his question in a way that could not help but bias the predictions in the direction of disobedience, nevertheless the surprise and dismay at his results has been almost universal, especially among intellectuals.

Now Milgram certainly deserves great praise for the ingenuity of his experimental design, but the proper question to ask is whether people *should* have been surprised by his results. And the answer to that question depends in substantial part on the depth of our understanding of the complicating philosophical issues involved—about the nature of authority, about the influence of social roles, and so on. The more informed our understanding of the philosophical questions underlying the problem, the less apt we would be, I think, to be surprised by what happened—and the more apt we would be to understand what happened. Unfortunately, it is in consideration of the conceptual and philosophical issues that Milgram's analysis goes conspicuously soft. In fact, the weakness of the analytical sections of the book underscores both the limitations of social science and of our entire philosophical discourse on the problem of authority.

Milgram begins his discussion of methodology (Chapter 2) by reaffirming admirably the importance of simplicity: "To study obedience most simply, we must create a situation in which one person orders another person to perform an observable action and we must note when obedience to the imperative occurs and when it fails to occur." Simple as pie. And yet, and yet...it's not that simple, especially as applied to studies of complex social phenomena such as authority, obedience, and morality.

Simplicity is the goal: isolate the variables, so you can tell cause from effect. The trouble is, no matter how hard you try, where complex social and moral phenomena are concerned, there are *always*

intervening variables.* I pretend to no originality here, but no matter how hard he tries to be "value-free," the social scientist is always thrown back to his research design—which means to *philosophical questions*, which most social scientists, with their training in quantitative methods, have neither the expertise nor the inclination to address. Unfortunately, there is no avoiding the fact that empirical research is only as valuable as the interpretation of data is persuasive.

The basic problem of assumptions and interpretation infects the heart of Milgram's analysis of authority. His greatest difficulty appears in his attempts for simplicity—in his trying to maintain a careful separation between obedience and authority on the one hand and "inner moral qualities" on the other—the grey-coated technician versus the screaming "learner." Authority is certainly to be found in the person of the technician, but is that the only place where authority can be found? Where did the "inner moral qualities" come from? Very likely from authority: parents, teachers, or others.

And what about the morality side—the "clear moral imperative"? In his research design, Milgram implies that moral considerations are to be found entirely in sympathy for the "learner." But repeatedly throughout the book, he notes the strong moral relationship binding the subject to the experimenter—a personal relationship, based on a promise to participate and cooperate, which would have to be broken by insult, as the experiment would be ruined by premature termination. Not only, as Milgram himself notes repeatedly, is morality not limited to one side; the extreme tension felt by many of those who obeyed suggests many were torn by conflicting moral obligations: if those who went to the limit really abdicated and became "passive," as Milgram's simple abdication theory argues, they would have had no cause to feel tension.

The problems of interpretation go beyond Milgram's simple dichotomy between authority and morality. Nowhere does Milgram offer a convincing discussion of *motive*. Throughout the book he assumes that those of his subjects who resisted the authority had greater moral resources than those who did not. But there is no discussion in the book that supports such an assumption—and it is certainly not inferable from the data.

Why did those who defied the experimenter do so? In post-interviews, they all gave moral reasons, and Milgram accepted them at face value. (Those who obeyed, of course, also gave moral reasons.) The problem with relying on personal explanations about motives is that people often don't *know* their own motives.** Those who disobeyed Milgram's grey-coated technician, whatever moral reason they gave, could have done so for any number of other reasons. (So could those who obeyed.) One reason for disobedience, which I hope the discussion that follows will make more understandable and credible, is the "morality" of revolt against authority, independent of the content of the actions revolted against. As I shall try to demonstrate, that motive, which suffuses Milgram's own simple dichotomy, represents the greatest authority problem our society now faces—the problem of authoritarianism masquerading as idealism and morality.

But I am getting ahead of myself. The important point here is to appreciate the dependence of social science on philosophy to produce real advancements in knowledge about man. It is a dependence the best social scientists well understand. But they are a small minority. By pretending to deal, "value-free," only with "the facts," most social scientists avoid and thereby obscure the really difficult, philosophical questions—questions of *value*—on which all knowledge claims must ultimately rest. By refusing to ask philosophical questions, we abdicate responsibility to our intellectual idiom, which, as in the Milgram book, is thereby left free to provide the answers. And for the problem of authority, that abdication is particularly dangerous.

The Real Issues Surrounding Authority

The problem of authority is not to be understood in terms of dichotomies like authority and obedience versus "conscience" and "inner morality." There is authority, and there is authority: some authorities are more morally acceptable than others. It seems vulgar to have to say so, but we are used to making rather severe moral distinctions between the authority of Hitler and the authority of Jesus. Moreover, there is a vast literature affirming the proposition that when certain kinds of authority decline, the way is open to authoritarianism. Robert Nisbet gives the reason: "Human beings...will tolerate almost anything but the threatened loss of authority in the social order. The void does not have to be great, or seem great, for the fears it arouses to become sweeping, for sanity in politics to disintegrate." ("The Twilight of Authority," *Public Interest*, Spring 1969.)

Whatever his book actually says, I doubt Milgram would disagree.

But now the problems. Milgram's book accepts without questioning them several popular assumptions in our culture about the problem of authority. First, he tends to use the word "authority" only to describe *traditional forms of authority*—including family, church, and local community, in addition to right-wing totalitarian political systems. Second, by ignoring the place authority may have had in encouraging his subjects' disobedience, he avoids any hint that authority may under certain circumstances either encourage moral action or lead to anything good. Lastly—and here the fashion is especially ominous—he nowhere thinks to consider that at least some of his subjects who disobeyed may have done so for deeply authoritarian reasons. These three assumptions suffuse the simple (false) dichotomy between authority and morality that underlies both Milgram's analysis and our intellectual idiom (which spawned his analysis). The tragic and dangerous irony in this view of the problem, which is held by the dominant intellectual and moral leaders of our age, is its origin in a world view that is itself (covertly) authoritarian.

The full dimensions of the problem begin to emerge as we consider the following datum: throughout modern intellectual discourse on the problem of authority, there is a great reluctance to use the word "authority" to describe radical or revolutionary forms of authority. To speak of "Che Guevara's authority," "Mao's authority," or "Timothy Leary's authority" somehow jars the ear and sounds unidiomatic.

This reluctance to use the word "authority" and especially "authoritarian" to describe revolutionary movements and governments is particularly noticeable in that primer of authoritarianism, *The Authoritarian Personality* (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson and Sanford, New York: W. W. Norton, 1969). *The Authoritarian Personality*, which heads every bibliography on the subject (perhaps in part because of the alphabetical positioning of Adorno's name), is about Hitler's Germany, not Stalinist Russia. Its celebrated F-scale, which supposedly measures authoritarian personality traits, would give the highest marks for tolerance and unauthoritarian behavior to the radical students who turned American campuses into armed camps in the 1960s.

An explanation for this double standard in theories of authoritarianism must go considerably beyond lack of information. The facts made popular recently by Solzhenitsyn were well known in intellectual circles by 1950, when *The Authoritarian Personality* appeared. The problem comes into focus, I think, in considering when and under what circumstances it becomes appropriate to use "authoritarian" to describe a Communist or socialist government. The word

Milgram nowhere addresses the greatest authority problem our society now faces—that of authoritarianism masquerading as idealism and morality.

"authoritarian" becomes appropriate to describe Stalinist Russia, for instance, only if one can understand Stalin as a "conservative" Communist—traditional, and therefore right-wing—who lost his revolutionary idealism. "Conservative," after all, is now the routine description of Kremlin leaders today—and it is that fact, I believe, more than any other, that guarantees Solzhenitsyn his audience among Western intellectuals.

To understand our reluctance to use the word "authority" to describe radical movements, it is first important to understand one fundamental distinction—between authority and coercion.† That distinction goes to the question of *consent*: power is the result of both authority and coercion, but the power of authority is *earned* (consented to), while the power of coercion is *imposed*. (In this connection, the most critical and fascinating problem of authority occurs when people *consent* to coercion, when coercion therefore becomes authority—as is so often the case in totalitarian societies. In simple terms, the question becomes: when and under what circumstances do people want to be told what to do?)

The difficulty is that the idea of consent implies, at some point, abdication: it suggests that at some point the person yields his intellectual and moral autonomy to another (the authority). The act of consent itself may be active, but once it has occurred, the person loses his autonomy and becomes passive. Which, in point of fact, is just what Milgram argues about his subjects.

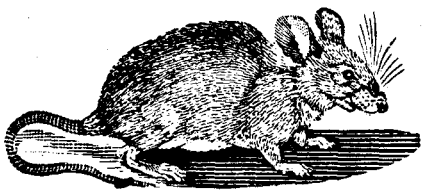
We come, then, to the reason why our intellectual and moral vocabulary does not permit the use of "authority" to describe radical movements. The reason reflects two critical assumptions intellectuals especially make about the consent necessary to maintain strong authority. The assumptions are that consent (obedience) to traditional authority is always unquestioning and blind, while consent (obedience) to radical or revolutionary "authority" is never blind, but always freely and consciously chosen. Or put another way, once a person has consented to traditional authority, he has abdicated, become passive. On the other hand, a radical never yields his moral autonomy: his commitment to revolutionary ideals is generated from within, from his—and here Milgram's words fit exactly—"inner moral qualities," and "conscience." Following from this, the lack of consent (abdication) assumed to characterize all radical or revolutionary commitments to authority suggests the inappropriateness of using the word to describe radical movements.

Understanding Authoritarianism, Right *and* Left

I hope it is clear that the problem here goes far beyond mere sloppiness or shallowness in our intellectual and moral vocabulary. There is a very serious (and in my opinion, very dangerous) world view operating here.

To put the problem in slightly different terms, toward the end of the 1960s, while right-wing totalitarianism was properly seen for what it is, the American intellectual and social establishment tended to see great "idealism" in radical violence. By 1969, the names of Eldridge Cleaver, Angela Davis, and George Jackson ranked with George Washington as the great moral leaders and heroes of American history. I grant that tempers have calmed somewhat since 1969—but the intellectual and social currents that produced the ongoing apotheosis of radical leaders remains strong in the American intellectual idiom.

The great gap in our intellectual discourse on the problem of authority comes into focus in trying to understand the



1960s. The universities especially, which were once regarded as bastions of openness and tolerance, became by 1968, if not earlier, our most conspicuous centers of authoritarianism. However difficult it is to use the word, there is no other word.

Therein lies the gap: the need for a theory of authority and authoritarianism that explains the 1960s. Far from shedding light on the problem, Milgram's simple authority-versus-morality analysis merely serves as the latest installment in a long series of tracts on authority which reinforce the myth that authoritarianism is a phenomenon restricted to the political Right, and to traditional forms of authority.

The problem of authoritarianism—of "bad authority," if you like—is a problem, as Erik Erikson once put it, of the longing for *totalism*. It is the longing for a total, pure myth—symbolized easily and always by the myth of the Aryan man. But the Aryan myth presents but one side of the authority problem—the *core* myth, attached to the core values of society.

Opposite the core myth, at the opposite pole of authority, is the myth of the *margins*—the myth of "world brotherhood" and the "international proletariat," of Rousseau's General Will, of (in the sixties) the "authentic black," or of the Revolutionary Man. On the surface, tolerance is the very essence of revolutionary idealism; but underneath, like the core myth, the marginal myth is totalist: but everywhere we have historical records this idealism has meant intolerance, backed by bloodshed on a scale never approached in core totalitarian systems. The reason is that blood shed for revolutionary idealism—for the marginal myth—is *idealistic* bloodshed, undertaken for "tolerance" and "goodness" and "inner moral qualities"—for the purpose, as James Reston recently described Maoist China, of bringing out "what is best in man, what makes him good." But then something happens; the revolution is "betrayed"; it becomes "traditional" and, for the first time—authoritarian.

The problem of authority ultimately reflects man's need for structure. Call it a "sense of belonging," or "community," or "purpose"—they all refer to the longing and search of everyone for personal structure. The only man without it is the man whose thoughts and feelings and actions are random—which is no man, except perhaps the insane.

The problem of authority has become acute in modern times with the ongoing decline of all traditional sources of structure and values—family, church, and local community.‡ As Robert Nisbet noted twenty years ago in his classic *The Quest for Community*, the decline of traditional associative communities and authorities, perhaps the most important theme in the history of the West, has been marked with a commensurate increase of power in the central state. It is this problem that Burke addressed in his famous statement: "Society cannot exist unless a controlling power upon will and appetite be placed somewhere, and the less of it there is within, the more there is without." But while Burke comes at the problem from the standpoint of institutions and social order, our concern here focuses on the need of *individuals* for personal structure: as people can no longer find structure in family and church, they seek it increasingly in government.

And that, in fact, is the great dilemma of authority—it is to understand why and under what circumstances people will consent to what kinds of authority. Why increasingly have they been unable to find in family and church and local community the personal structure and values which they are now increasingly seeking in authoritarian political structures? Perhaps most importantly: why does the bulk of the intellectual class, who control our intellectual and social idiom, increasingly consent to the imposition of social values, an imposition obscured by the myth that radical consent is "freely chosen" from "inner moral qualities"?

These are among the questions we must ask, if we are to have any hope of understanding the modern crisis of authority—and especially of averting what increasing numbers of very sober observers are coming to see as a slow but steady decline into authoritarianism. They are questions that Milgram, in his book that many very serious people are treating as a classic, nowhere thinks even to consider.

The problem results from failings in our intellectual and social discourse on the problem of authority. But at a deeper level, it results from the assumption that social science, "value-free," and severed from philosophy, can contribute anything important to man's understanding of himself. That assumption—which is based, simply, on a philosophical mistake—has stunted our intellectual and moral discourse; and it is in large part responsible for the perils in our present condition.

NOTES

* For an excellent general discussion of this problem, and its relation to understanding scientific revolutions, see Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press), 1962, 1970.

** The habit of accumulating data ("facts") by personal interview, a favorite technique of social science, has serious limitations, which mirror the limitations of social science itself. In every interview, the handling of both questions and answers depends entirely on the assumptions the social scientist makes when he develops the questions and interprets the answers.

In asking questions, the first assumption tends to be that people will answer the question you ask and no other question. The second assumption, which vastly (over)-simplifies the problem of interpretation, is that the person being interviewed both understands his own motives and will tell them to the interviewer. Thus, it becomes permissible to accept the answers literally, and at face value. In view of the agonies man has endured both in the past and today to secure self-understanding, one must find the assumption that the interviewee understands his own motives (i.e. that his answers need no interpretation) absurd on its face.

Perhaps the most important consequence of taking the interviewee's answers at face value is to surrender control of the answers (and therefore, frequently, of the study) to the philosophical and social idiom, which may have entirely determined the answers.

† Some writers, notably Irving Kristol and Robert Nisbet, make the same distinction in terms of authority versus power. I prefer the narrower word, because power seems to me a property of both authority and coercion.

‡ It is interesting to consider how Milgram's experiments would have come out if they had been conducted in 1968, rather than in the early sixties. One might guess that in 1968 the general decline of trust and confidence in institutions reflected in all surveys on the subject would have inspired a substantially higher rate of defiance than the rate Milgram recorded a few years earlier. If so, it is reasonable to suppose both Milgram and most of his reviewers would have exulted at the "moral progress" thereby indicated. This hypothesis—of both result and reaction—adds an interesting dimension from which to understand both the experiment and its critics. □

James Q. Wilson

Abolish "Reform"

On learning of Samuel Johnson's remark that patriotism is the last refuge of the scoundrel, Roscoe Conkling, a New York politician widely acquainted with scoundrels, remarked that Dr. Johnson had overlooked the possibilities in the word "reform."

Some good things and many bad things have been done in the name of reform, but the worst thing of all has been to cloak any proposal for change in the seductive disguise of that ill-used word.

My object here is not to attack those proposals labeled "reforms" but to criticize the labeling of all proposals as reforms. The villain of the piece is not the reformer, but the reporter.

"To reform" means to improve by alteration, to abolish abuse or malpractice; "a reform" is a change for the better, an improvement in social, moral, or political conditions. We all understand and follow this usage in everyday conversation, as when we speak of the reformed drunk. I admit there are some exceptions: when we refer to "Reform Jews," we do not mean Jews who are better than the Orthodox variety; in fact, because Reform Jews are less observant of the traditional customs, the Orthodox might well think of them as worse Jews. Nor do we mean, by "Reformed Church" necessarily a more—or less devout—one, but only one that follows the teachings of Calvin. But these are the rare exceptions, clearly described as such by the dictionary.

Journalists and politicians understand none of this, however. To them, any change that is broadly liberal or participatory in intent, and some changes that are libertarian in intent, are "reforms." Now such presumption is understandable in politicians whose vocation requires them to be propagandists, but is unforgivable in journalists, whose craft enjoins them to be fair. But the word "reform" has become so ingrained in journalistic usage that many newspapermen and broadcasters would be surprised to be told that anyone could object to the word.

Well, I object. The mood of the citizens and voters is remarkably sensitive to what the media tells them is important, and though there is not much evidence on this, it is probably also sensitive to what the media suggest all "right-thinking" people should regard as desirable. As a result, many people believe the wrong things.

Newspapers for some time have been writing of "campaign reform." Who could be against it? Few are, and those politicians that have expressed some doubts have been castigated. There is, as it turns out, a great deal wrong with those campaign finance plans that have been labeled "reforms." For one thing, the new federal statute is probably an unconstitutional infringement of free speech because it tells citizens they can spend no more than $1000 on any candidate however much they may wish to endorse, by advertisement, his cause. Would journalists who label this a "reform" also so label a proposal that anybody could make any public speech he wanted as long as he did not spend more than $1000 to rent a hall? Would they label as a "reform" a law that restricted to $1000 the amount that could be spent on an ad in the *New York Times* that attacked General Thieu, supported school busing, or denounced oil company profits?

Or take "party reform." Whatever was proposed by the supporters of George McGovern at the Kansas City midterm convention of the Democratic Party was called a "reform" while whatever was proposed by the followers of George Meany was called "resistance to reform." The subject of party rules is a complicated one; I intend to make here no judgment on the plans of the two Georges. And that is precisely the point. To call one set of proposals "reforms" in headlines and "straight" news stories is to prejudge the issue.

Finally, consider the candidacy of anybody who challenges Mayor Daley in the Democratic primary in Chicago. Odds are he will be called the "reform candidate," which is to say he is the good guy and the mayor is the bad guy. If the voters prefer Daley to his opponent—as they have, by increasing majorities, for the last twenty years—the press will of course conclude that the voters of Chicago have rejected "reform," which is to say they have rejected "good government." Then the papers, with the aid of columns by Mike Royko, will speculate as to the process whereby the integrity and good sense of the electorate could have been so foully corrupted.

My criticisms would be beside the point if "reform" had become a synonym for "change." But all changes are not called "reforms." The press has made it quite clear that reducing the special tax treatment of capital gains is a "reform"; eliminating the special tax treatment of gifts to schools and churches is not a "reform." Yet both are "tax loopholes." Increasing the control that members of congressional committees have over the chairmen of those committees is called "congressional reform"; increasing the powers of the congressional leadership to formulate and enact a party program would probably not be called a reform.

Some journalists may make the bold defense that they are aware of the value implications of the word "reform" and, far from employing it by accident or because of an unconscious preference for a political cause, they use it deliberately and correctly. Some proposals are good; reporters can tell which they are; and reporters have the "right" (no doubt even the duty) to tell their readers, even in news stories, what is true, beautiful, and just.

I ask them only to remember that most practices they now denounce were once

considered to be reforms. Were it not for the "reforms" of the past, the advocacy journalists of today would be unemployed. Prisons were originally heralded as reforms; so were the juvenile court system, aid to families with dependent children, urban renewal, the Federal Reserve System, the state police, the Federal Bureau of Investigation, the Interstate Commerce Commission, the Federal Communications Commission, the Civil Aeronautics Board, the civil service system, prohibition, and building trades unions. Given what many reporters now think of these institutions, all praised by the best and brightest reporters of the past, can they be so confident of their ability to tell a "reform" from a nonform, unform, or antiform?

Why not just get rid of the word, or use it only in inverted commas or when it can be attributed to a spokesman who is directly quoted? It would cost the press not a single reader, it would not prevent them from saying editorially whatever they liked, it would not take away a single by-line.

Instead of "campaign reform," they can write of "campaign spending laws"; instead of "party reform," they can refer to "party rules changes"; instead of "reform candidates," "opposition candidates." It is all so simple and reasonable. Naturally, journalists will follow my advice.

Naturally, the sun will stop rising. □

James Grant

Hayek: The Road to Stockholm

Inflation and recession together grip the land; oil sheiks plot and politicians promise. Economics, a science less dismal than disputatious, was honored last year in a manner uniquely suited to the times. The Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences, in October, conferred the 1974 Nobel Prize in economics jointly upon Gunnar Myrdal and Friedrich A. Hayek. The choice does little to quiet the heresy that economists despise consensus. Rarely have two men agreed on less. Myrdal, one of the architects of the Swedish Labor Party's welfare state, is an avowed socialist; Hayek, visiting professor this year at the University of Salzburg in his native Austria, is one of the free market's principal champions. If the two can be said to share anything—apart from prize money totalling $123,000—it is a love for scholarship, boundless energy, and learning that spans the social sciences.

In the United States Myrdal's fame rests less on economic theory than upon his landmark study of race, *An American Dilemma: The Negro Problem and Modern Democracy* (1944). So, too, with Hayek: one thinks of him first as a philosopher rather than an economist, the author of *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and *The Road to Serfdom* (1944) instead of *The Pure Theory of Capital* (1941). To be sure, both men are accomplished technicians. Each toiled during the Great Depression on questions of money, interest rates, and the business cycle, and though they worked independently their paths often crossed. Hayek edited, in 1933, a German translation of an early Myrdal study on monetary theory, "Monetary Equilibrium." Six years later, in an English edition of the same essay, Myrdal praised Hayek's analysis of production, saying that in its treatment of "roundabout" or capital-intensive processes of production, Hayek's work outshone that of another rising theorist, John Maynard Keynes. (Myrdal, however, was critical of both Hayek and Keynes for not taking proper account of risk and the anticipation of change in business.)

By the end of the 1930s, Hayek and Myrdal had begun to turn away from pure economics to broader social questions, and there they parted ways. It had been by no means evident before then—at least, not to readers of their economic tracts—what politics the two men might secretly have harbored. True, Hayek was skeptical then, as now, of government economic interventionism. But if a villain was to be found in the dusty pages of his *Monetary Theory and the Trade Cycle* (1933), it was the ogre of an inflationary banking system. The publication, in 1944, of *An American Dilemma* and *The Road to Serfdom* undid what political mysteries lurked in the two men's thought. But at no time have their differences come more vividly to light than in the interviews that followed the Academy's Nobel selections in October.

Myrdal, speaking to reporters in New York, called for gasoline rationing and a return to wage-price controls—"a government program with teeth," as he aptly described it. Hayek, declaring that "all major crises have been caused by inflation," spoke of the dangers of government intervention and warned that permanent remedies would require "some substantial unemployment."

In noting the economists' contradictory views, the *Wall Street Journal* praised the judges' liberality. "In effect what the Royal Swedish Academy has done is to bestow its high honor upon a scholar who has spent the better part of his life arguing against the very collectivist trends toward which the academy is thought to be in sympathy," the paper said of Hayek. "It is to the credit of the academy that, in honoring Drs. Hayek and Myrdal, it has implicitly acknowledged that the important questions about man and his government remain unsettled."

It is unlikely that Hayek, decorous yet firm at seventy-six, would agree with the *Journal*'s conclusion. His faith, a faith in facts, admits little doubt, and certainly none on the subject of man, his government and the economy. In Hayek's eyes, no question ever yielded more readily to analysis, nor suffered more acutely before sophistry. Hayek believes in markets because he believes in human ignorance, the hopeless diffusion of economic knowledge among individuals. Planning will not work, because no man, no group of men, can grasp the intricacies of economic life. Acting on their own, armed with knowledge (mundane, certainly, but no less important for that) available only to them, free men direct society unconsciously. Yet these uncoordinated actions are the lifeblood of progress. "Liberty is essential in order to leave room for the [unexpected]," he wrote in *The Constitution of Liberty*. "All institutions of freedom are adaptions to this fundamental fact of ignorance, adapted to deal with chances and probabilities, not certainty." Liberty is a practical virtue.

Hayek as Economist

As graduate students, both Hayek and Myrdal shared the guiding influence of Knut Wicksell (1851-1926), a Swedish economist who saw in the divergence of interest rates an important cause of the business cycle. Bank lending, Wicksell believed, distorts the equality between savings and investment that would naturally prevail in a barter economy. Money complicates matters. With it, the rate of interest—the measure of the usefulness of capital—is not determined strictly by the demand for investment and the supply of savings.

In fact, Hayek went on to say, there are two rates of interest. One is the money rate, which depends on the amount of money bankers have to lend, on the one hand, and the demand for loans, on the other. The second is the "natural rate," which—to quote Hayek—is that rate "at which the demand for loan capital just equals the supply of savings."

Note that the money rate and the natural rate need not be equal. If bankers allow the money rate to dip below what businessmen perceive as the return on capital, loan demand will rise. Money, in the borrower's judgment, is relatively cheap. The rate of interest, in other

words, is artificially low, and it stimulates investment that the supply of savings alone, uninflated by bank credit, could not support. Businessmen build more factories, buy more equipment, than society can immediately employ. Inflation mounts, as "created" purchasing power courses through the economy; the structure of production becomes distorted and ultimately the boom collapses.

But the importance of money is not that it affects the overall level of prices, Hayek said. Like other members of the "Austrian" school, notably Ludwig von Mises, Hayek emphasized the influence of money on ratios of exchange. It is the balance among relative prices that determines the productive mix of capital and labor. Prosperity fueled by cheap money tends to enlarge the economy's capital stock unduly, causing an inevitable cyclical downturn.

Writing last November in the *New York Times,* Hayek warned that inflation presents a graver threat than unemployment. Our troubles are not those of "capitalism," he said, but rather of faulty fiscal and monetary management. "What we have done is to represent on a colossal scale what in the past produced the recurring cycles of booms and depressions; to allow a long inflationary boom to bring about a misdirection of labor and other resources into employments that can be maintained only so long as inflation exceeds expectations." In short, we have distorted the structure of production.

Contemporary criticism of Hayek's major theoretical work—*Prices and Production* (1931); *Monetary Theory and the Trade Cycle*; *Profits, Interest and Investment* (1939); and *The Pure Theory of Capital*—was spirited, though not uniformly enthusiastic. Alvin H. Hansen and Herbert Tout charged in 1933 that his analysis was too narrowly drawn. Hayek, they said, appeared to believe that if money were held neutral, "the disturbances which continually arise from the side of *real* phenomena"—errors in business judgment, for example—might somehow be overcome.

Joseph A. Schumpeter, writing ten years later, was more favorable. "On being presented to the Anglo-American community of economists, [Hayek's ideas] met with a sweeping success that has never been equalled by any strictly theoretical book that failed to make amends for its rigors by including plans or policy recommendations or to make contact in other ways with its readers' loves or hates. A strong critical reaction followed that, at first, but served to underline its success, and then the profession turned away to other leaders and interests."

Chief among these, of course, was Keynes and his *General Theory.* And yet, wrote Schumpeter, "the much greater success of Keynes's *General Theory* is not comparable because, whatever its merit as a piece of analysis may be, there cannot be any doubt that it owed its victorious career primarily to the fact that its argument implemented some of the strongest political preferences of a large number of economists. Politically, Hayek swam against the stream."

Whatever the critical preoccupations of the 1930s, it is clear that Hayek's ideas rose upward from his forebears' foundation. Ever scrupulous to acknowledge an intellectual debt, Hayek wrote that the Wicksell-Mises theory of interest-rate divergence already offered "the most important elements" of an explanation of the trade cycle. New research, not surprisingly, has overtaken some of Hayek's work. In *Monetary Theory and the Trade Cycle,* for example, he charged that American monetary authorities had sought repeatedly to cure the depression by a policy of credit expansion—"with the result that [it] has lasted longer and has become more severe than any preceding one." A now-standard study by Milton Friedman and Anna Schwartz (*Monetary History of the United States*) shows that, on the contrary, the Federal Reserve actually aided in contracting the United States' money stock—by a third between 1929 and 1933—and that the contraction was disastrous.

Hayek as Philosopher

As Hayek grew older, he became less preoccupied with the pure theory of economics. Thus, by 1960, the year his massive *Constitution of Liberty* was published, he could write, "Though I still regard myself as a technical economist, I have come to feel more and more that the answers to many of the pressing social questions of our time are to be found ultimately in the recognition of principles that lie beyond the scope of technical economics or of any single discipline."

Hayek traces his break from technical economics to an essay he wrote in 1936, titled "Economics and Knowledge." With this essay, he has written, "I was led into all kinds of questions usually regarded as philosophical.... It was only through a re-examination of the age-old concept of freedom under the law, the basic assumption of traditional liberalism, and of the philosophy of the law which this raises, that I have reached what seems to me to be a tolerably clear picture of the spontaneous order of which liberal economists have so long been talking."

Hayek, incidentally, has dismissed his *Road to Serfdom,* a popular treatment of the dangers of centralized economic planning, as no more than an "incidental by-product" of this long-range plan of study. Notwithstanding, the book was an immediate *cause célèbre,* inspiring one Herman Finer to concoct a rebuttal titled *Road to Reaction* (1945). Hayek, Finer charged, had mounted "the most sinister offensive against democracy to emerge from a democratic country for many decades." It was Hayek's view, of course, that economic planning of any stripe invests government with powers that unfailingly smother liberty. *Road to Serfdom* stands as one of the most eloquent statements of libertarian principle ever written. *Road to Reaction* symbolizes the frenzied resistance that such ideas must surmount.

Hayek focuses his "tolerably clear picture" of a free society more sharply in his latest book, *Rules and Order* (1973). The essay, weightier than its 184 pages might suggest, both reunites familiar Hayekian themes (the rule of law, the wonder of the market) and marks a turn in the author's thinking. The turn is a pessimistic one. Constitutions, the Enlightenment's attempt to secure liberty through limited government, have failed, he asserts. In *Constitution of Liberty,* Hayek described the "traditional doctrine of liberal constitutionalism"; in the third volume of a scheduled trilogy (of which *Rules and Order* is the first—and so far the only—installment), he aims to propose some "institutional invention" to salvage matters. But for now, Hayek writes of the just application of reason to human affairs. Fittingly, therefore, he begins with the tenet of human ignorance —ignorance, that is, at the top. Quoting Schumpeter, Hayek writes, "the economic life of a non-socialist society consists of millions of relations or flows between individual firms and households. We can establish certain theorems about them, but we can never observe them all." Nor should we try to direct them, he argues. The complexity of society and the blurring pace of change demand flexibility.

After a fashion, man has provided this flexibility for himself. Not that he has set out to design free markets, for example, or the natural law that pre-dates legislatures. Rather, he has evolved them. The distinction between that which man has evolved spontaneously—for no purpose except general usefulness—and that which he has fashioned outright, to serve a concrete social goal, is crucial, Hayek writes. For if someone "made" markets, then someone must govern them. And if legislatures enacted all law, then they may alter any law.

"If indignant reformers still complain of the chaos of economic affairs, insinuating a complete absence of order, this is partly because they cannot conceive of an order which is not deliberately made, and partly because to them an order means something aiming at concrete purposes which is, as we shall see, what a spontaneous order cannot do."

His defense of what the past has wrought is not the defense of prescription, however. Nor is it the apotheosis of a simpler day. What we have inherited—markets, law, and morals, for example—clears the way for still more progress and, perhaps someday, utopia. The "spirit of the gentleman and of religion," the cornerstone of a traditionalist society, is nowhere present here.

Rules and Order, nonetheless, rests on distinctions that traditionalists have long defended: first, between a "grown" order, that which man has evolved

despite kings and committees, and an organization, which he has created with specific ends in view (the difference, for example, between markets and the Federal Trade Commission). A second distinction is that between the purpose-free law of liberty, laws that apply universally, with no aim but to serve justice, and the purposeful rules of legislators—those that direct people and institutions toward fixed social goals. A "true rationalism," Hayek writes, takes account of what man makes almost in spite of himself, while a "naive rationalism" ignores all but man's conscious achievements. It was these distinctions that W.E.H. Lecky had in mind, perhaps, when he described the salient error of conservatism as stupidity and that of liberalism as folly.

The mischief of naive rationalism, the hubris of reason, Hayek lays principally to two seventeenth-century philosophers, René Descartes and Thomas Hobbes. Tradition, history, and custom grew suspect under their sway: "Morals, religion and law, language and writing, money and the market, were thought of as being deliberately constructed by somebody, or at least owing whatever perfection they possessed to such design," Hayek writes. "Not until the eighteenth century did thinkers like Bernard Mandeville and David Hume make it clear that there existed a category of phenomena which... [was] later described by Adam Ferguson as 'the result of human action but not of human design.'"

Rules and Order draws heavily on Hayek's thirty-five years of philosophical work. "I am convinced," he wrote of the price system in *Individualism and the Economic Order* (1948), "that if it were the result of deliberate human design, and if the people guided by the price changes understood that their decisions have significance far beyond their immediate aim, this mechanism would have been proclaimed as one of the greatest triumphs of the human mind."

In *Constitution of Liberty,* Hayek wrote in identical terms of the law—the set of generalized rules of conduct that "tend to develop from unconscious habits into explicit and articulated statements and at the same time to become more practical and general.... If it had been deliberately designed," he continued, "it would deserve to rank among the greatest human inventions. But it has, of course, been as little invented by any one mind as language or money or most of the practices and conventions on which social life rests."

The problem with this argument, so prevalent in Hayek's writing, is practical. What of antitrust law and corporate regulation, for example? Granted that the market, in its broadest sense, was evolved and not decreed. But what of the New York Stock Exchange, which for nearly two hundred years has required its members to fix brokerage commissions? Now, should we let spontaneity run its course—if the exchange has indeed evolved spontaneously—or outlaw tradition in the name of free-market theory? There arises a problem of definition. How do we know spontaneity when we see it? Surely, even the common law was no "mere anonymous tradition," Edward S. Corwin wrote. "With certain nineteenth-century historians of the law in mind," he continued, "Dean Pound voices the legitimate complaint that they will not 'hear of an element of creative activity of men as lawmakers, judges, writers of books, or legislators.... They think of the phenomena of legal development as events, as if men were not acting in the bringing about of every one of them. For the so-called events of legal history are in truth acts of definite men, or even of a definite man.'"

How, then, does one attest to the virgin birth of institutions? One probably does not—it is enough to understand that some arose more spontaneously than others; that "reason" will not always get us where we want to go; that to succumb to coercion's short-term stability is to mortgage the adaptive powers of freedom. Hayek has steadily advanced this understanding. He has charted the shoals of planning and bid us sail to freedom's deeper waters. Together with Ludwig von Mises, he has shown us anew the genius of markets. Rarely has a Nobel Prize been better deserved. □

William Murchison

Holmes, Sweet Holmes

A certain distinguished beekeeper on the Sussex Downs finds himself achieving celebrity once again. Not that Mr. Sherlock Holmes has been dwelling in obscurity, even at the age of something like 120.

But only consider the spate of Holmesiana which lately has deluged the bookstores—a Sherlock Holmes scrapbook, a novel about the villainous Moriarty, even an American novelist's presumptuous attempt to supplement "the canon" (as Sherlockians call it) of sixty A. Conan Doyle short stories and novelettes. The canon itself is being extensively reprinted these days.

And there is more: William Gillette's ancient stage play, *Sherlock Holmes,* has been revived on Broadway. More yet: It is a success.

One couldn't venture to guess that Holmes is uniformly pleased with the character of the attention being focused on him. In Nicholas Meyer's novel, *The Seven-and-a-Half Per Cent Solution,* he finds himself working hand-in-glove with Sigmund Freud. Holmes' opinion of Freud, though unrecorded, is likely a low one, the good doctor having been too much hung up on the subliminal, not the factual. Nor can Holmes be happy that in John Gardner's *The Return of Moriarty* it is not Holmes but a lowly Scotland Yard inspector—not Lestrade or Gregson, fortunately—who foils the Napoleon of crime.

Still, such attentions gratify plenty of Sherlockians, who do not like to see upstarts like James Bond commanding center stage. Bond!—a brute and a voluptuary. How different from Holmes, who is not just an ascetic, not just a keen reasoner—no, he is a great man. Such a man as we seldom encounter these days. That is no doubt a major reason for his recrudescent popularity.

What has happened to our great men? There seem to be so few around. Put aside Solzhenitsyn, and whom do we have? Harold Wilson instead of Churchill; Carl Albert instead of Taft; Warhol instead of Monet; Vonnegut instead of Hardy. We are hellbent on equality, we denizens of the late twentieth century. Greatness is suspect. Far the better the ordinary, the average, which is less frightening, more predictable.

But deep down, do we not really fret, however fitfully, at the loss of our great men? If so, then perhaps we turn to Holmes, a man vain enough to know he was great, great enough to justify his vanity.

Of course Holmes is not at all your overbearing Victorian aristocrat. He is soundly middle-class. Lord Peter Wimsey and Albert Campion, the aristocratic brain children of Dorothy L. Sayers and Margery Allingham, respectively, are infinitely his social superiors. But Holmes is unintimidated by rank or wealth. Ability is what counts with him; and to his ability there seems no limit.

"I have my methods, Watson," says Holmes. Indeed he has. The man can examine a battered hat or a walking stick and deduce everything worth knowing about its owner. (Holmes' methods are hardly spurious; Doyle learned them from observing a medical professor of his.)

That which escapes Watson—who is an intelligent layman; no bumbler, as Nigel Bruce portrayed him—never escapes Holmes. What was so curious about the behavior of the dog in the night? It was

simply that the dog did nothing. Holmes had noticed.

Now and then, of course, Holmes is stumped; but then he smokes his pipe or plays his violin. Soon inspiration dawns. What a fool he has been not to see! The hunter is in full cry, the quarry as good as caught.

Nor is there anything irresolute or indecisive about Holmes once he has resolved his problem. He is in charge; he knows exactly what to do. Alas, he has a penchant for keeping his design from everyone else. Think of poor Sir Henry Baskerville, trudging across the moor as the hound pads after him. All very well for Holmes and Watson to be waiting with revolvers, but they might have mentioned this to Sir Henry.

The heroes, the idols of the present age—such heroes and idols as there are—are mostly physical types. There is Bond with his karate chops, for example. Holmes is pure intellect. His sharp and burnished mind cuts cerebral Gordian knots at nearly a single stroke.

But that is not to say he is in any way preposterous. No late-Victorian Bond is Sherlock Holmes. Over supper, Holmes explains his train of reasoning. Deduction follows upon deduction. Well, of course! How simple it all seems now! Holmes shrugs, but only a little wearily. He is used to this sort of depreciation. *Omne ignotum pro magnifico.*

For all his reasoning power—in which he is exceeded only by his sedentary brother Mycroft—Holmes is no mere calculating machine; no computer, spitting out flawless conclusion from flawless data. Readers are apt to find Holmes something of a straight-laced misogynist. He does not care for women; he will not marry "lest I bias my judgment."

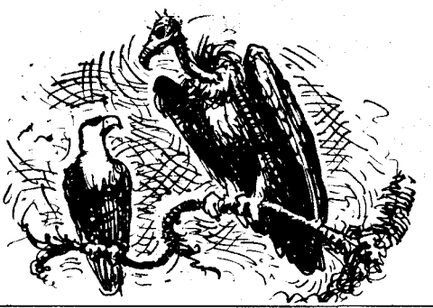
But Holmes, like so many great men, is more human than lesser men. He is ofttimes indolent, not a little vain. He is shockingly ignorant on certain topics. He did not know, until Watson told him, that the earth travels around the sun, the matter being one of complete indifference to the investigator of crime. A most untidy housekeeper he is: once he decorated his wall with a "VR" done in bullet pock marks. And of course there is his drug-taking. It worries even Watson, who obviously knows a thing or two about drugs.

If Holmes has his faults, he has his amiable side. Out of a sense of justice, he sometimes lets confessed murderers off scot-free, realizing that, as it were, the victim had it coming to him. Here was Charles August Milverton, the king of blackmail, threatening a perfectly blameless lady over some silly, indiscreet love letters. The bullet Holmes saw her bestow on Milverton was merely blackmailers' wages.

And it should not be forgotten that Holmes is no woman-hater, really. If he does not choose to marry, he chooses to admire the remarkable Irene Adler, who has soundly foxed him in the matter of the king of Bohemia.

Yes, a great man, Sherlock Holmes. Which makes him sort of a musty relic, like some overstuffed ottoman dragged down from the attic, yet a relic on which to gaze is to be strengthened, stirred. It would be pleasant to coax him out of retirement in Sussex; but the chances are slim. So soon as Holmes emerged, Harold Wilson, the master egalitarian, would probably nationalize the private investigation profession. Lestrade would become Home Secretary. The greatest detective who ever lived would be a minor civil servant, subject to displacement under the quota system. Not necessarily an unusual fate for great men these days, but hardly one that his admirers will wish for Sherlock Holmes. □

The Nation's Pulse



by Peter J. Rusthoven

Common Sense about Intelligence

On December 22 of last year, the *New York Times* published a long front-page article, under the byline of Seymour Hersh, about unauthorized covert activities allegedly carried on by the Central Intelligence Agency within the United States. According to the *Times*, the CIA had conducted in the last few years a "massive illegal domestic intelligence operation," which included infiltration of political groups and organizations and maintaining secret files on some ten thousand Americans. This story was, of course, immediately picked up by the networks and the wire services, and created a predictable hubbub among the nation's political leaders. Among considerable competition, Senator William Proxmire (D.-Wis.) won the prize for the most thoughtful, deliberative, and reflective response to Hersh's as yet unsubstantiated charges, by immediately demanding that former CIA director Richard Helms resign as Ambassador to Iran and return to Washington to face the wrath of a congressional inquiry. President Ford, then in the midst of his much publicized Christmas ski vacation at Vail, Colorado, demanded in turn an immediate report from the current management of the CIA, and assured newsmen that nothing of the type reported by Hersh was going on now—thereby fueling speculation that it had indeed gone on in the past. In any event, the *Times* continued running stories for a few weeks, other members of the media continued to follow suit, and any number of Congressmen were at pains to declaim that they yielded to no man in their disapproval of domestic spying. Eventually, the President resorted, amid cries of "whitewash," to the expedient of appointing the so-called "blue ribbon" commission chaired by Vice President Nelson Rockefeller, which will, in the standard phrase, "investigate and make recommendations."

A few weeks later, Washington again got itself into a huff, this time over domestic surveillance by the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Congress had a special interest in this particular exercise in internal intelligence, however: according to *Time*, the major targets of the FBI's questionable inquiries were the worthy members of the House and Senate themselves. Apparently, the Bureau has any number of files filled with information of varying reliability about the sexual proclivities, drinking habits, and sundry other peccadillos of our national representatives, a fact which has moved several members to flights of angry rhetoric. Senator Gale McGee (D.-Wyo.) has opined that "obviously," the files are "to be held in reserve for some kind of blackmail." Meanwhile, Senator Adlai Stevenson III (D.-Ill.) has warned his less alert colleagues that "the danger of the police state is no longer unreal." As of this writing, a Senate select committee is busily engaged in investigating the whole matter to evaluate the substance of these and other charges.

Now it is hardly surprising that the issue of covert surveillance of American citizens by investigatory agencies of their

federal government has come in for widespread critical commentary. Moreover, this response strikes me as being, to a degree, a perfectly healthy one. All babbling about an impending "police state" aside, complacent acquiescence in large-scale internal intelligence gathering would be a sorry comment on national attitudes toward civil liberties. Nevertheless, before we persuade ourselves that the recent revelations about the CIA and FBI are fine fodder for another scandal à la Watergate, it might be worthwhile to pause for a moment in an attempt to put this sudden pother about domestic spying in some perspective.

The first thing one should keep in mind is that these revelations are not divine in origin, devotees of the *Times* notwithstanding. Many of the "disclosures" about the CIA and FBI are couched in the standard hedging language of newspaper reportage—to wit, "sources" that "allege." Both former director Helms and current director William Colby have denied outright many of those allegations while qualifying the validity of others. (For example, Colby has pointed out that six thousand of the ten thousand CIA files on United States citizens represent the results of routine overseas checks requested by other government agencies.) The American public has grown accustomed of late to viewing official denials with an immediate skepticism that passes in some quarters for political sophistication, and it may well scoff at self-serving statements by heads of the CIA. However, those who are convinced that wherever the news media finds smoke there must be a fire might consider than even the *New Republic*—hardly a friend of either the Administration or the CIA—has questioned both the accuracy and the reportorial integrity of current coverage of the agency's activities (see Walter Pincus, "Covering Intelligence," in the February 1, 1975 issue). Similarly, there is no hard evidence that any of the FBI files on Congressman have been used for the dark purposes so readily ascribed to them by Senator McGee. In short, it appears likely that many of the scandalous "disclosures" being bandied about at present will turn out to be overstated, inflammatory, and generally inaccurate.

Second, it is not clear that even those revelations which are factual necessarily indicate that the activities of either the CIA or the FBI have been completely improper. Consider for a moment the FBI's files on Congressmen. Any number of Senators and Representatives are in positions where they have, of necessity, access to highly classified national security information. Clearly, if such men lead shady lives outside the public eye, they may be vulnerable to outside pressure based on threats to disclose those things they would rather keep private, and any government concerned about protecting vital secrets should be aware of such vulnerability. In like manner, any direct associations of a Congressman with groups or individuals of questionable loyalty is a matter of proper governmental concern. We are all put off by the idea of J. Edgar Hoover regaling LBJ with juicy tidbits of gossip gleaned from these files, and are generally sensitive to the potential for abuse in any governmental activity of this sort. However, given the extreme importance of the information to which some Congressmen must be exposed, and given the fact that some real snowbirds have managed to persuade the electorate to elevate them to national office, I can see little overall difficulty, in principle, with having an investigatory agency of the federal government keep an eye on the activities of our 535 national representatives. In much the same way—without, of course, having any firsthand knowledge—I can easily understand the CIA's finding it necessary, in the course of discharging its unique responsibilities, to keep tabs on some ten thousand individuals out of a population that exceeds two hundred million.

Thus, it is possible that much of the current furor is based on reporting of questionable accuracy about activities which may themselves be largely legitimate. Were this the extent of the matter, one might well dismiss the entire affair as merely another example of the unreliability of media coverage of "scandals" and the seemingly limitless capacity of many public figures to respond to such coverage in ways that are neither serious nor reflective. The present discourse about the CIA and FBI involves, however, an additional and more serious factor. Quite simply, I suspect that much of the criticism of the two agencies springs not so much from a belief that either has "overstepped" its authority, as it does from a growing attitude that *any* covert activities undertaken in the name of national security or defense are somehow silly and illegitimate.

In part, one can see this by comparing the current reaction to that which occurred—or rather, did *not* occur—when similar activities were undertaken for purposes which many of today's critics no doubt considered legitimate. Recall, for a moment, Robert F. Kennedy's pursuit of Jimmy Hoffa when the former was attorney general and the latter the head of the Teamsters Union. The government campaign to get Hoffa on jury tampering charges involved both infiltration of the Teamsters and use of a personal friend of Hoffa as a paid informant. The testimony of that informant, which proved critical in securing a conviction, included details of Hoffa's conversations with his attorney—conversations which Hoffa undoubtedly thought were confidential and whose revelation by a paid government agent could arguably be seen as a violation of the Sixth Amendment's guarantee of right to counsel. (In *Hoffa* v. *United States* [1966], the Supreme Court rejected that argument in affirming Hoffa's conviction, but until then the law was at best ambiguous on the issue.) Yet there was no public outcry at the time against the government's "shoddy" tactics, nor any frenzied shout that our liberties were in danger. Rather, the predominant reaction was that a somewhat unsavory union boss had gotten his due. Or consider the government investigation of the deaths of three civil rights workers slain in Mississippi in the early 1960s. In this case, there was infiltration of a private political organization (the Ku Klux Klan), use of paid informants, and official surveillance of a large number of individuals. Again, no respectable spokesman took the government to task for its methods; no Senator decried the imminence of the "police state." Instead, both the investigation itself and the resulting convictions were widely applauded.

Now I have virtually no sympathy for Jimmy Hoffa, and a fair amount of positive antipathy for the Ku Klux Klan. But the incidents described above do indicate that when the ends are perceived as just, activities similar to those denounced today are considered perfectly legitimate. But can it really be that tactics which warrant approval (or at least acquiescence) when one is nailing a corrupt labor leader or a murderous Klansman—can it really be that these tactics merit withering contempt when they are pursued in the name of national security? There are recent indications, I submit, that this difference in ends may indeed be responsible for much current criticism of the CIA and FBI.

The past several months have witnessed publication of a truly unique book—*The CIA and the Cult of Intelligence*, by Victor Marchetti with John D. Marks. The authors are former intelligence agents and their work is a self-proclaimed exposé. What is unique about this effort is that it is, to the best of my knowledge, the first book in our history to be censored before publication by the government, with the direct approval of the courts. Some 168 passages in the published version are left blank and marked *"Deleted."* Those who are familiar with the extreme sensitivity of the judiciary to "prior restraints" on free speech will understand how really remarkable this is.

I have not read this book; to be frank, I have some qualms about contributing to the authors' royalties. But I did run across an interview with Marchetti in the January 1975 issue of *Penthouse*—a magazine whose own exposés usually exhibit a more erotic, pictorial emphasis—that merits comment. In it, Marchetti speaks volumes—not about the CIA, but rather about the perspective of those who are most vociferous in their criticism of our government's intelligence efforts. There are, as one might expect, the predictable cheap shots. Director Colby, we are told, has "the mentality of a Heinrich Himmler," and is "the kind of guy who is best qualified to run a concentration camp." William F. Buckley, Jr. is portrayed as a man with "a religious need to *hate* something," who would have been "really great in Spain during the Inquisition," and (believe it or not) as

"simpleminded." Clearly, Marchetti has developed a few first-class hatreds of his own. But the most striking feature of the interview lies in Marchetti's view of what is at the base of the CIA's predilection for evil. It suffers, he feels, from the naive belief that the United States has "a responsibility to contain Communism, keep the world free [sic] for democracy, *and all that sort of stuff*" (emphasis supplied). We have the silly, paranoid outlook "that there's something evil out there, something attacking us." And finally, Marchetti gives his explanation of why nothing will change with the elevation of Gerald Ford to the Presidency: "He's caught up in the old Cold War thing the way most conservatives are. *He's all for national security and national defense. It's an unthinking reaction*" (emphasis supplied).

I have little doubt that within a year Marchetti will have been lionized on talk shows and campuses from coast to coast. For his view is truly the bottom line of the current pother. The problem to Marchetti —and he is far from alone—is not what the CIA or FBI are doing *per se*; rather, it is that justifying such activities in terms of national defense and national security strikes him as "unthinking." After all, doesn't this reflect the discredited mentality of the Cold War? Is it not at best a sham, and at worst a cover for something far more sinister?

I suspect that both the CIA and the FBI have indeed, on occasion, exceeded their authority. And recent events should have alerted all of us, if it was still necessary, to the dangers of casually justifying such excesses as demanded by national security. But the Marchetti mentality should make us equally chary of joining the full-scale pursuit of the CIA and FBI that threatens to develop in the nation's capitol. In large part, the pursuit promises to reflect the idea that the United States can eliminate, by an act of sheer will, any need for covert intelligence operations. One may rest assured that neither the Russians nor the Chinese will join us in this quest for a nobler, less secretive international community, and that any hasty, unilateral acts of purification on our own part will do little to promote either freedom at home or stability abroad. □

The Talkies

by Benjamin Stein

Janis & Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore

Movies about women are becoming like what movies about blacks were a few years ago. As soon as they are made, they are guaranteed an audience and at least a few sympathetic reviews. We are living in the era of women. This is International Women's Year and Hollywood is simply pouring out movies about women, their oppression, their liberation, their solidarity.

Of course, as it happens, to no one's surprise, some of the movies are nothing more than slightly revised versions of *Back Street* or *Stella Dallas*. There has always been a large market for what have long been called "women's movies," weepy melodramas of a woman's enslavement to Mr. Wrong and her eventual salvation, after many trials and humiliations, by either Mr. Right or the grim reaper. The movies were stereotyped, with brutish men and saintly women, double standards of all kinds, and guaranteed extraction of tears because of the woman's nobility in adversity and her sweetness in triumph.

But now there is a new genre of movies about women which are not "women's movies." The best one so far is *Janis*, subtitled, *The Way It Was*. It is a documentary about the late, great Janis Joplin. The movie is made of interviews with her when she was at her peak, and long stretches of film of her concerts. It is fascinating watching from start to finish. It is the story of a woman who was also a person.

Janis Joplin was a great blues singer. Some people consider her the greatest white blues singer of all time. Her songs told a lot about the way she felt. She was not a calculating, artificial creation of public relations people—like Alice Cooper or David Bowie. As trite as it sounds, as incredible as it was in the late 1960s, she sang from her heart. She was asked in an interview what young people wanted. She answered after a moment of thought: "To have a good time and to be sincere." She was a young person and she obviously had the same goals, and she achieved both by singing the blues. She had sincerely suffered and paid her dues, and she had a good time by telling people about her bad times—in huge auditoriums for $30,000 a night.

When we see Janis Joplin singing in California, in Canada, in Germany, we are seeing all of Janis Joplin, because she put all she had into her singing. It was, as people used to say, "all up front." But to be sure that we see that Janis' singing really is her, we are also shown some interviews with her. And it is clear that she was a bitter, hurt woman, trying to recoup some of the lost affection she missed as a child. That may be true of all performers, and maybe of all people. But we don't always get to see it in quite so unvarnished a way.

Janis did not give out a false note in either talk or song. She loved being famous, but she still hurt. When she was on Dick Cavett's erstwhile TV show, he asked her how she felt about her high school classmates from Port Arthur, Texas. Her answer was a classic explanation of why people like to be famous, rich, and powerful: "They laughed me out of class; they laughed me out of school; they laughed me out of town. Now I'm going back there."

But when the cameras follow her to her tenth high school reunion, we see that she is extremely ill at ease and obviously somewhat abashed and in awe of the punks who made fun of her ten years before. Fame can do a lot, but it can't do everything.

Through the limited media of interviews and songs, we are given a portrait of a real, struggling person who levels with us. The makers of the film also level with us. There is not a word of editorializing, no hokey photographs of her funeral, no pictures of her tombstone. We all know Janis Joplin died of a drug overdose. We can see from the movie the strain she was under, and no underlining is necessary. The point is made—she suffered and she triumphed and ultimately she failed. But she comes across as a real live person, not a media creation. She also is clearly an independent creature, not a slave to stereotypes or mindless revolt.

***

At the other extreme of fictitious, overworked, clichéd garbage that, with every

possible chance, misses the mark of even a glimmer of reality, is the box office sensation *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore*. The Surgeon General should require a warning notice that this movie is "A David Susskind Production," and that should be enough to scare off viewers, but instead they are coming in droves.

Alice is the quintessential example of *Back Street* brought up to date. Alice is supposed to be a thirty-five-year-old swan of a woman, sensitive, intelligent, artistic, long-suffering, married to a brutish Coca Cola driver who doesn't even thank her for cooking his favorite dish. In God's name, Mr. Susskind, have you not a shred of dignity? Does anyone honestly believe that there are more sensitive women married to loutish men than vice versa? To show that a woman married to a pig is unhappy is insulting to everyone; how anyone can keep breathing life into that chestnut is a mystery. Men and women can be happy or unhappy married to people who are different from them or the same. Must we always see pathetic women and thug-like men? Can't we occasionally see something other than this pre-Christian relic of a cliché?

Alice's husband hates their son, a pathetically abused kid who will surely grow into a mass murderer. Luckily for everyone, the hubby dies in a truck crash, and the wife and kid are free to find their dream. In Alice's case, the dream is to be a singer in a nightclub. Alice, played by Ellen Burstyn as if she were jacked over the moon on speed, is supposed to be thirty-five. A few years ago, in *The Last Picture Show*, this same actress played a woman who was supposed to be in her forties or fifties. Even that was pushing it. For the hulking, sagging, wrinkled Ms. Burstyn to be playing someone of thirty-five is grotesque.

Alice and the kid pick up and leave their home town. They come to some town in the Southwest where Alice incredibly—she can neither look good nor sing—gets a job in a bar as a chanteuse. Of course, she leaves her son alone all day and night in a hotel room, but what the hell, she's got to be free. Also of course, she gets involved with a lunatic man who, of course, seduces her and then threatens to kill her, of course.

She leaves and goes to Tucson where she gets a job as—now all you people watching this in the Sutton Theatre on the East Side of New York will really empathize with this—a waitress! And she wanted to be a singer. That's exploitation. Any *man* who wanted to be a singer could just be a singer.

Somehow she escapes the firing squad she deserves for her neglect of her son, and meets up with Mr. Right, played by Kris Kristofferson, who is supposed to be her age, but looks like her son.

Just like in the old weepers, she realizes her life's ambitions through a man, just as her life's ambitions were thwarted by a man before. She, in fact, can't do anything without a man. And if someone says, "That's right. That's the system," then what about Janis? She didn't have no man, and she sang the blues, but she made her own life.

Alice is a whimpering, pathetic excuse for a movie about women's rights, although it has somehow got the reputation as the "chic" women's picture of the spring. But *Alice* is not about women or about men. It is about exploitation—of audiences by filmmakers, of clichés for profit, of women's anger and self-doubt.

Alice is also boring, poorly directed, acted with embarrassing amateurishness, and neither funny nor sad. Seeing it is just like dropping a quarter down a grating on the sidewalk. It is frustrating, but it teaches you to be careful. □

Chester E. Finn, Jr.

A Federal Policy for Higher Education?

With many of the federal higher education programs expiring during its lifetime, the Ninety-fourth Congress has already begun to address itself to the tangled question of which to keep, which to change, and which, if any, to add. Subcommittee hearings have begun and the university lobbies in Washington have started to write their legislative shopping lists.

Uncle Sam presently provides about ten billion dollars a year to the nation's colleges and the students enrolled in them, in all about a fifth of the institutions' total budgets. A study recently made for the National Commission on the Financing of Postsecondary Education counted some 380 separate federal programs through which these funds flow. Therein lies much of the problem faced by anyone trying to make sense of this subject, for despite, or perhaps because of, this proliferation of programs, there is effectively no overall federal *policy* toward higher education. (I use the terms in the straightforward sense employed by Daniel P. Moynihan in his essay "Policy vs. Program in the 1970s" [see *Coping: On the Practice of Government*, pp. 272-284]: "Programs relate to a single part of the system; policy seeks to respond to the system in its entirety.")

I should like to suggest four general reasons for the absence of a federal higher education policy, and then to outline a few of the key issues facing those who will be working on the legislation over the next eighteen months.

1.) The federal role in American higher education evolved over many years, slowly at first, much faster since World War II, by the familiar process of adding programs, a few at a time, in response to particular Washington priorities of the moment. Hence the federal *interest* in higher education has been defined in the same incremental way as, say, the federal interest in agriculture or transportation. While the federal government has been actively involved in education since the early days of the nation, Congress and the President have never come to a policy decision that "henceforth the nation has an interest in education and shall define that interest in such-and-such a manner."

2.) Despite the many clauses that now comprise the functional definition of the federal interest in higher education, our national government has never embraced the most basic element of all, the maintenance of the higher education system itself. The establishment and ongoing support of colleges and universities, as of primary and high schools, has been left to state and private initiative. Although federal resources have been employed in the creation of new universities—most notably under the 1862 Land Grant Act which sought to give each state the wherewithal to establish at least one such institution—and of new schools within existing universities, a state's pattern of higher education and the operation of its colleges and universities have never become a federal responsibility. To be sure, Uncle Sam has at times aided categories of colleges, and it runs a few of them—notably the military academies—itself, but the continued existence of the University of Chicago or the balance of two- as against four-year colleges in New Mexico are not the sorts of issues addressed in the federal statutes. This undoubtedly helped build our varied and pluralistic system of postsecondary schooling but it also produced a federal preoccupation with specific programs, categories of students, research projects, and the like: hence a situation not very conducive to overarching policy.

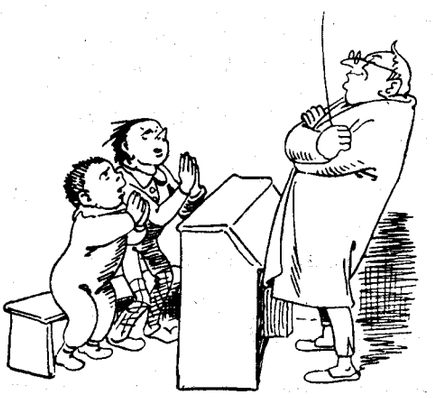
3.) Unlike other areas with similar histories of diffuse and incremental government involvement—agriculture and transportation again come to mind—the federal *structure* for dealing with higher

education is exceptionally discombobulated. No agency or congressional committee has responsibility for more than a fraction of the programs and moneys that affect higher education, and nowhere in the executive branch short of the President himself is there anyone with an overview of the myriad activities that comprise this subject. The congressional education committees now at work on student loans and scholarships, for example, have no jurisdiction over the largest federal scholarship program of all, that of the Veterans Administration. (The recent congressional reforms do give the House education committee some oversight of programs not within its original jurisdiction, but the effect of that change remains to be seen.) Nor do they have much to say about the billions of dollars in research money that flow from a dozen Washington agencies into university coffers. The Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the only Cabinet agency with some general responsibility for higher education as such, has a Deputy Commissioner of Education as its highest ranking official with full-time duties in this field. That is a fourth-echelon position, the occupant of which might expect access to the Commissioner and occasionally the Assistant Secretary, but rarely the Secretary and never the President. And at this writing the position isn't even filled, except by an "Acting" official brought up from the fifth echelon.

4.) For purposes of dealing with the federal government, the higher education lobby is a loosely coordinated assemblage of interest groups. Some of these organizations are skilled at securing desired results for their members, but taken together they have a less than distinguished record of agreeing on what they want from Washington and then uniting to build a persuasive political case for themselves. Some of the reasons for this are obvious. The interests of the community colleges do not necessarily coincide with those of the graduate schools; the universities that care about the NASA budget only coincide in part with those that gain from the Agriculture budget; the formulae for federal scholarships that benefit public colleges may find little favor with the presidents of private ones. The so-called "proprietary" schools—actually profit-making institutions—generally wish to be treated like conventional colleges, but their inclusion raises complex issues about the nature and motives of higher education and threatens its unanimity as well. Lacking the shared interests and hierarchical structure of, say, organized labor or the shipping industry, higher education has therefore tended to seek its varied ends in ways that encourage a proliferation of programs and discourage any move toward a unifying policy.

One can easily exaggerate the virtues of overarching policy and centralized management, and many in higher education feel that they have a better chance of getting what they want from Washington—and avoiding controls they don't want—if federal funds flow from a variety of agencies through a great many programs that are watched over by bureaucrats and subcommittees with competing interests and limited authority. Hence, for all the occasional clamor to establish a Federal Department of Education or the like, one finds higher education leaders reluctant to empower any one federal official with such sweeping control over their fate in Washington.

If this was true in the sixties, it is more so since the inauguration of Richard Nixon, for most educators viewed his Administration with a deep mistrust that, although largely unwarranted at the start, was increasingly reciprocated as the months passed. The fact that many of the provisions in the landmark higher education legislation of 1972 embodied principles and proposals that emanated from the Nixon White House was little recognized and, by the time the Watergate tide reached its flood stage, was immaterial anyway. Higher education chose



to concentrate its efforts on a Congress that it considered more responsive and less hostile, a decision that also had the effect of sustaining the fragmentation of policy and program that the congressional structure encourages.

The advent of thoughtful and politically savvy new leadership in some of the higher education lobbies—notably the umbrella American Council on Education—combined with new faces in the Ford White House suggests that we may now have entered a period of rapprochement between higher education and the executive branch. But the ball still rests with Congress, where talented legislators such as subcommittee chairmen Claiborne Pell and James O'Hara, with much help from Albert Quie, John Brademas, and others, will write the new legislation with or without the assistance of the Administration.

Attention to date has focused on H. 3471, O'Hara's bill to amend the six major student assistance programs run by the Office of Education. These now total about two billion dollars and touch millions of students and virtually every college in the land—although they comprise only a fifth of overall federal spending in higher education.

As debate about student aid—grants, loans, work-study programs, and the like—heats up in Washington, it invariably turns on such arcane matters as benefit levels, cutoff points, interest rates, default levels, and regulatory problems, for like many another area of federal domestic policy in the 1970s these deliberations take place largely among technicians and experts.

Without belittling the importance and complexity of the details, it should be noted that they tend to obscure a pair of important policy choices with vast political ramifications.

First, will the available student aid money end up helping the poor or the middle class? This is, of course, an extremely loaded choice, and it may be noted that in the field of higher education policy these socioeconomic groups are defined rather differently than for most federal domestic programs: poor generally means a family income up to about twelve thousand dollars a year, which is to say approximately half the American people (although a smaller fraction of the college-going population), whereas the addition of the "middle class" to the rolls of those eligible for financial aid could push such assistance to families with incomes well above twenty thousand dollars and thus embrace eighty or ninety percent of the nation's population. The amounts presently devoted to student aid under the OE programs—and likely to be devoted in the next few years—are simply inadequate to afford significant help to that large a group. Thus although the "poor" would be covered by any formulae that are adopted, if most of the rest of the nation is also covered then the sums available for the lowest-income families may not be adequate to make college a real possibility for them, at least not without considerable extra subsidy from state and private sources. But high inflation and rising costs of college attendance are also pinching middle-class voters, and there is much sentiment for redirecting the programs so that the money is stretched across more of the population. (It should be understood that although the existing legislation—the 1972 amendments—made a historic commitment to scholarships for the poor, the funds that would be needed for that program of Basic Education Opportunity Grants to fulfill its promise are partially diverted into four older programs. Hence at the moment many critics feel the combined effect of the OE student aid efforts is inadequately helpful to *either* category in the population.)

Second, will the money be parceled out in sums and ways that primarily help students at low-tuition (read public) colleges or that give them the opportunity to choose high-tuition schools and thereby pump more funds—and more students—into the nation's hungry private institutions? A program that gives financial aid to a great many students but in which the maximum amount is small may have the effect of encouraging attendance at public universities, except for wealthy

students and those willing to borrow large sums to attend private ones. A federal boost to matriculation at low-tuition schools may also have a less obvious effect: since the public institutions themselves receive large operating subsidies from the taxpayer (generally through state governments) each student in them has what amounts to a handsome hidden scholarship even if he pays all the tuition himself. Thus federal efforts that tend to encourage public college enrollment at the expense of private have the general effect of promoting public subsidies to all students regardless of their families' means, a situation that is undeniably attractive to students but that at least causes one to ask whether this is the most efficacious use of the society's tax resources, particularly when there exist private colleges that, with some rearrangement of aid policy, might be made equally attractive to many students at less overall cost to the public sector.

These two issues subsume dozens more, ranging from administrative matters—the programs as they now function are incredibly difficult for students to understand or colleges to administer, and they suffer from some troublesome inconsistencies—to the most basic debates of social philosophy. (Who, in the end, should pay for higher education, the student who obtains it or the society generally, and if the latter, then which economic strata within the population should subsidize which others?) Chances are that as with many such nettlesome matters, the Congress will again leave them largely unresolved, which is to say that it will tinker with the programs at great length but in the end sidestep the tough choices and seek to do something for everyone, thus again probably doing little for anyone. Those who watch this process would do well to focus on the political lineups, for the student aid debate in recent years has tended to shape up in rather unexpected ways, the Democrats worried about the middle-class family and the Republicans tending to dwell on the needs of the poor. The higher education lobbies tend to find agreement among themselves only on student aid packages that entail vast increases in total federal spending; and the Administration, inherently opposed to any such increase, tends to favor the Basic Grants approach (thus the poor) and to seek the elimination of all the other programs.

For all the attention to issues raised by the Office of Education student assistance programs, it should be understood that such a limited debate cannot touch on some other considerations of importance to American higher education. I will outline four such matters, all of which would seem central to a serious review of federal higher education policy.

1.) Has the time come for some kind of general aid to colleges and universities? The federal government has for a decade pursued a so-called "student aid strategy" based on the premise that federal dollars, other than for research, should flow to students who can use them to shop among the nation's postsecondary institutions. Most state support to higher education comes in the form of grants to public colleges via formulae based on their enrollment figures. A prominent effect of these two funding mechanisms is to make a college's income heavily dependent on its success at recruiting and enrolling an ever-growing number of students. This approach has much to be said for it, but while it worked reasonably well through the fifties and sixties, it may be far less serviceable in a time when the rate of inflation outstrips the (now modest) growth in the pool of potential students. The effect may be stagnation and slow starvation for many colleges, especially those private institutions faced with shrinking enrollments and soaring tuitions. Yet across-the-board assistance to colleges and universities would carry with it the risk of undue federal control, of high cost to the taxpayer, of rewarding inefficient and expensive colleges, and of sustaining marginal institutions that the marketplace would probably let die. Moreover the residents of Wyoming, a state with no private colleges, might well ask why they should be taxed to support the selective universities of New Jersey or Connecticut.

2.) Others might argue that Princeton and Yale are national resources, and that the maintenance of *quality* in American higher education is itself a proper federal concern. The recent special issue of *Daedalus,* subtitled "Toward an Uncertain Future," is full of gloomy predictions by academic notables that have as their general theme the loss of excellence in American universities. One cannot be certain whether this is true or if so whether it is a problem of the sort that Washington can help solve, for the selective support of particular institutions on the basis of elusive and elitist-sounding measures of academic quality runs up against the populist sentiment and political dynamics of elected officials at every level. Over the years federal support of "excellence" has come through research grants awarded on a competitive basis to universities with particular academic strengths, and it is indisputable that such research moneys have been concentrated in a hundred or so well-known public and private institutions. Whether project research funding of this kind—with all its ups and downs and changes in emphasis—is adequate to ensure the maintenance of high quality scholarship and training is not clear, particularly in private universities, and particularly when it constantly faces criticism in Congress. Senator Proxmire, for example, recently charged the National Science Foundation with continuing "to pour funds into the academic oligarchy of the large universities." It may be significant that the only sector of American higher education that now finds its income growing faster than inflation is the two-year community colleges. Enrollment growth accounts for some of this, to be sure, but one wonders if it might not also have something to do with the political attractiveness of giving kids a college education rather than underwriting the costs of advanced scholarship.

3.) Have we got a proper mix between holding colleges accountable for federal funds and leaving them the autonomy they need to function, or has the balance tipped in the direction of excessive federal "regulation" of American higher education, perhaps without even securing adequate accountability along the way? Dozens of federal agencies now regulate various decisons and actions of academic institutions, and to academics at least, these efforts often appear capricious, irrelevant to the educational mission, unrelated to federal funding, costly in themselves, and ultimately threatening to scholarly standards. The complications in university hiring posed by the Affirmative Action movement are too well known to bear repetition here. (What's more, HEW appears recently to have backed off. Although this retreat may be reversed in court, it is extremely hard to force an understaffed and reluctant federal agency to enforce an unpopular provision in anything like an evenhanded way on some three thousand campuses.) But other forms of federal regulation abound: college cost-accounting systems must include detailed records of minutiae like what is consumed in dining halls, to help government calculate college "costs" for purposes of scholarship and loan formulae; labs and other facilities must make vast and expensive physical plant alterations to comply with the Occupational Safety and Health Act; scientific research on human and animal subjects is subject to limitations, as is the confidentiality of student files. For many years it could be argued that a university had the choice of seeking federal funds, and thereby subjecting itself to the maze of accompanying compliance provisions, but now virtually every college in the land receives federal money, at least for student financial aid, and they may with some justification feel inconvenienced and aggrieved by the strings attached. Since federal regulation of higher education is not itself a policy—quite the contrary—nor even a program, and since it spans so many agencies and statutes, one doubts that either Congress or the executive branch will assay the subject. Yet it is hard to debate national higher education policy without at least asking whether it is our intention that federal officials should make a growing share of the decisions on our campuses and whether, in return, we have at least ensured that our funds are being spent in ways that accomplish the purposes intended.

4.) Should national higher education policy take account of state efforts to support higher education? Almost alone among the various areas of federal domestic activity, higher education programs virtually ignore the states and concentrate on individual students and universities. With few exceptions, federal postsecondary spending arrangements make no attempt to stimulate state spending, to compensate for differences

in state wealth or effort, or to give state governments money to allot as they see fit. Revenue sharing may help, and the 1972 education amendments did contain two minor provisions designed to prod state effort, but on the whole one must still conclude that the states have little place in federal higher education policy, even though they bear primary responsibility for the nation's higher education system. It is unclear whether this is a desirable parceling-out of governmental roles in a federal system or whether it is simply a residue of the days when all Washington sought from colleges was specific research projects. In any case it would seem fruitful to examine the results of the present nonpolicy and to assess its adequacy for the future. Does federal money, for example, tend to flow disproportionately to rich states or poor, to those that tax themselves heavily to support higher education or those that don't, to those with strong public or with historically private postsecondary systems?

It seems doubtful that these kinds of questions will be asked and less likely that, if asked, they will get definitive answers in Washington between now and June 1976. Neither the government nor the affected interest groups seem organized to deal with them, and the mere presence of four-hundred-odd programs is reason enough to suspect that ten years hence there will be five hundred. Perhaps that is the best way for Uncle Sam to deal with the extraordinarily varied and complex system of higher education in the United States, a kind of involuntary adaptive response to the difficulty and hazards of trying to organize and rationalize the whole thing. It would, however, be interesting to see someone make the attempt. □

Tibor R. Machan

Demythologizing the Poor

It is a common precept that the poor shall inherit the earth. But it is a widespread dogma that they deserve to. Why should we accept and live with this point of view?

That this dogma of the inherent virtue of the have-nots is widely propounded is unquestionable. In almost any discussion with those who want the state to possess greater and greater power to regulate human life, the basic premise is that the poor must be helped. Not so much that some of them *should* be helped but that all of them *must* be helped, come hell or highwater.

Surely if the poor included even some evil folks, the call for helping the poor would have to be modified. And the thought they they must be helped—that we must all be *forced* to help them—would have to be absurd. We might be told that the deserving poor should be helped. But from shallow calls for unlimited governmental programs to "assist" them, all the way to complex philosophical treatises on justice advocating political systems almost solely on grounds that the poor must be helped, the assumption that all of the poor deserve help is clearly evident in our culture. Even on television programs criminals are always rich and greedy, while the good and innocent folks are penniless. Should a poor individual do anything wrong, one is certain to find that he *had* to do the deed: his poverty drove him to it. This is also the idea in politics when theft, glorified as taxation, is justified by reference to the plight of the poor. And most newscasters never miss a chance to renounce any social or political event that contributes to the welfare and goals of the haves, while they constantly and diligently proclaim dedication and sensitivity for the cause of the have-nots.

Virtually all efforts to reverse America's economic tendencies toward bankruptcy are met by cries about the fate of the poor. Everything the poor need is accepted as their natural right, to be supplied by others without question. When Alan Greenspan, Ford's chief economic advisor, recently remarked on the relatively huge losses suffered by Wall Street brokers in the current inflationary trends, his audience booed and jeered him roundly. When brokers suffer losses the bulk of the socially concerned seem to respond without the slightest care or compassion—as if people on Wall Street had no capacity for suffering and couldn't possibly deserve a helping hand. But the notion of cutting out some federal programs aimed at helping the poor is generally considered to be criminal by the variety of people who booed and jeered Greenspan. Never mind for a moment that the bulk of such federal programs as minimum-wage legislation, advocated as a means to eliminate poverty and to promote the "general well-being of workers... without substantially curtailing employment or earning power," hurt precisely the poor and unskilled in the marketplace. (Of course *some* people are helped by all such programs, even aside from the bureaucrats who run them. But millions are hurt by them.)

If we grant that being poor automatically renders someone worthy, the point of helping those in poverty has to be self-defeating. Why should anyone contribute, even voluntarily, to the degradation of a human life, in this case the life of a poor and, therefore, virtuous individual? If the poor are so virtuous, and if virtue deserves support, the most appropriate support the poor could receive would have to be support for their poverty. Judging by prevailing dogma, the wealthy simply cannot be deserving (except, perhaps, if the wealth came about entirely by accident and is consistently demeaned by the person struck by such cruel fortune). This is not simply an impression one receives from the popular media. It is an intellectual creed, propagated at fancy scholarly conferences. If it has any merit whatsoever, the poor, who on the other hand are already granted virtue, ought to avoid riches with all their might. For theirs would be the greatest sin: having known virtue, to leave it aside for the evil of riches.

There is not a shred of evidence to support the view that the poor are any more virtuous than those not poor. One's economic condition has nothing to do with his moral character. We all have our own particular conditions to contend with as moral agents. Rich and poor alike must make the choices which can turn out good or bad, and poor as well as rich can neglect to make the right choices. To confer virtue on the poor because they are poor is to rob them of human dignity. Any self-respecting person of meager means would find it appalling for others to judge his moral character on grounds that he is poor. Moreover, I have personally been poor, quite poor, in my life, and I have lived with others who were poor, very poor. I can testify that the poor have no monopoly on virtue. Some are decent, others pretty rotten, and most just vacillate in between.

Under certain circumstances, however, it is not unjustified to suspect the poor of less than complete virtue. I have in mind a marketplace where government does not interfere to restrict mobility or opportunity. Clearly when the state meddles with the economy, too many folks gain unearned advantages in the business world. Subsidies, special "rights," close ties between firms and regulatory agencies, exclusionary laws, protection from foreign competition, and the like make it possible for some to maintain economic security with no real effort other than hiring the government's widely available gun.

Under conditions of a free market, however, it is often reasonable to suspect that those who are really destitute have neglected their own care considerably. I am not making a purely historical point,

one that is easily researched. My point is that when people neglect their well-being, permit their future to rush in while they have given it no thought, produce children but take little care to ensure their economic security, refuse to prepare for their old age, and otherwise contribute to their own poverty, it is not unreasonable to suggest that their actions betray a character flaw, moral negligence, and thus deserve no rewards at all. Clearly, even in the free marketplace, poverty does not always betoken irresponsibility. Artists, scholars, scientists, teachers, and many others could pursue values that do not show up on the GNP. But on the whole when people neglect their economic welfare, fail to retrain after an old job becomes obsolete, become unattentive to their own and their family's needs and wants, this is nothing to be admired. There are, even now, among the poor many who have no one else but themselves to blame for their poverty. And to sell the rest of the people on the fairy tale of the virtue of poverty will simply make this lamentable state of affairs continue beyond its natural course.

It won't do here to talk about the incredible advantage of "initial endowments," a favored argument of modern egalitarians. In a free society one's responsibilities tend to match one's initial circumstances—a poor man need not cope with setting up parties for foreign ambassadors, while the wealthy do not have to keep the grocery budget under close scrutiny. Rich and poor and in-between can all do better or worse with what they have at any point. It may be trite to say, but happiness is not guaranteed by wealth, although, of course, wealth does contribute to the fulfillment of our material, biological, aesthetic, and other needs and wants.

Another favorite argument of those who reject the free society for some well-managed state (well-managed by whom, if people in freedom are so vicious and such bunglers?) concerns the morality of successful businessfolks. When it is proposed that the market be freed and there be a sustained, peaceful marathon race (not a boxing match, as most conceive of market transactions), egalitarians protest than when some get rich, they will only suppress the poor: economic liberty may last a while, but soon the successful will step on those who would challenge their stance. So the poor stay poor quite independently of effort, ambition, and the like. The poor are *kept* poor, period.

First of all, if becoming rich is a sufficient condition for becoming mean and heartless, then the poor should certainly be best off, seeing as they are the least callous. But the egalitarian does not see the logic of his dogma, so he continues advocating (and trying, once he's been given a post in the state) making the poor richer and making the rich poorer.

Secondly, all of this may miss the crucial point about the concern with the poor. It has always seemed to me to follow from one's *concern* for some goal that *effort* to achieve it will be forthcoming. It is, for instance, one thing to *wish* that there were no poverty, another to *want* to eliminate it. The latter would call for action. And the action to be taken to help the poor is rarely forbidden. Unlike spending money on illegal activities, there is no law to prevent one from giving half or all his wealth to another person. While here and there some of my egalitarian acquaintances do send off a check or two to United Way, Red Cross, and other charities, most of them send their checks to political pressure groups

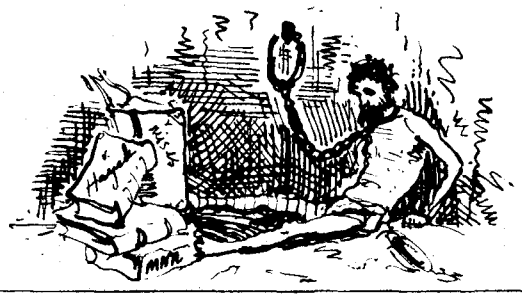
that help only the goal of *egalitarian power*. I have never known of an egalitarian who actually, voluntarily practiced his own doctrine of redistribution of wealth. And this is quite understandable—those who invoke the egalitarian arguments do not seriously believe them. These people are often very bright. They are not barred from economic reality—they know of it only too well, so they avoid consideration of it like they avoid reading some updated economic history books about capitalism. It is all wrong to believe that egalitarians are generally well-meaning, decent, compassionate people—if this were so, there would be no poverty anywhere, since the egalitarians everywhere would have eliminated it through sustained private, voluntary effort. No, the point is that their concern for the poor is largely a pose and their real goal is political power. The motivation, although quite difficult to generalize, seems to be envy. Why do those businessmen, engineer dropouts, entrepreneurs, and the like, with no finesse, no sophistication, no appreciation for the nuances of language and life—why do these seem to have so much to say about what goes on in the world? Why should barbers, bakers, insurance agents, bankers, building constructors, and their kind have so much say about the things filling department stores, the content of television shows, the style of furniture, the color of the local drive-in restaurant? Who are these people to get away with such vulgarities, in the face of so much talent—all the intellectuals, scholars, educators, and artists, who obviously could construct a more beautiful and worthwhile world?

Now I am not making a case for the *neglect* of those with whom egalitarians are supposedly concerned. It does seem unjustified to lay *that* much stress on the lot of the poor simply because they are poor. On the contrary, I think we should help those who have met with misfortune or handicap through no fault of their own, but I ground such assistance not so much in a duty to the helpless as in the natural generosity and benevolence characteristic of those who value successful life—a sort of fraternity of the living, of those bent on "making it." Egalitarian solutions to the conditions of the unfortunate do not embody such generosity. The politicization of charity and benevolence can only reap neglect of and hostility to those who would be made the parasites of a productive society, instead of the beneficiaries of those who have chosen to lend a helping hand.

Even those who argue that charity is a moral duty must reject the egalitarian's approach—there cannot be anything virtuous in observing a duty because one is threatened with jail. (Kant, the supreme altruist, never sanctioned force in producing virtue.) Egalitarians have argued that general political reforms would be more helpful than private charity, so we might as well concentrate on remaking the world. That will be charitable enough. But this won't do. There is no evidence that general political reforms have ever helped enough of the poor, even those who have deserved help, to offset the drastic harm in their wake. I mean that welfare measures, socialization, and similar egalitarian approaches are demonstrable flops. By now most advocates of such reforms cling to their last but highly dubious argument: by making the state even more responsible for distributing wealth, perhaps, maybe, as at least a logical possibility, things will get better! This is not an argument but a confession of ignorance.

In the final analysis, our entire moral atmosphere needs serious revision. Those who are concerned with restoring a free society must rigorously re-emphasize the value of liberty and the moral and economic cases for a free society. It won't do simply to dismiss the enemy as fools ignorant of economic reality and caught up in blind homage to misfortune. Ignorance is part of the problem—but evasion is its most frequent cause. It is not that egalitarians could not know that the poor are not all that nice, and that the rich aren't all that nasty—they do not want to know that. It is not that they could not know that the free market is best for the fortunate and unfortunate alike—the effort to acquire that knowledge is not made. (Nor is it in the bureaucrat's self-interest just to keep on being a part of a disgraceful system—most bureaucrats refuse to make the effort to imagine and embark upon some better ways to go through life.) By refusing to come to terms with these facts about the opposition, the supporter of the free market may feel sophisticated and beyond petty moralism. Yet it will prove his world's undoing. □

A Libertarian's Basic Repertoire



by Ralph Raico

A Libertarian Maestro

When on October 9 of last year it was announced that the 1974 Nobel Prize in economics would go to Gunnar Myrdal and F. A. Hayek, a person close to the Nobel awards committee was quoted as remarking that, "Hayek never expected to get it and Myrdal never expected to share it." Indeed, Hayek's selection came as a surprise to those familiar with the tendency of the international intellectual community to promote the reputations of its favorites often without regard to solid merit. (Hayek himself had already written in his essay "The Intellectuals and Socialism" that "the layman, perhaps, is not fully aware to what extent even the popular reputations of scientists and scholars are made by [the intellectual] class and are inevitably affected by its views on subjects which have little to do with the merits of the real achievements... every scholar can probably name several instances from his field of men who have undeservedly achieved a popular reputation as great scientists solely because they hold what the intellectuals regard as 'progressive' political views....")

The great news was spread across the telephone network of North America, to numerous select points, creating joy wherever it was received. From now on, it will be more difficult to look upon libertarianism as an ideological oddity that surely must have died with Herbert Spencer. For the highest kind of international recognition has now been accorded the acknowledged world leader of the party of freedom, the author of *The Road to Serfdom* and *The Constitution of Liberty*.

In the brief space available here, no attempt can be made to treat the whole of Hayek's work (a bibliography, as of 1969, can be found in the *Festschrift* for him edited by Erich Streissler, et al., *Roads to Freedom*), and his important contributions to economic theory, in the tradition of the Austrian School of economics, are outside our scope. Instead, our subject will be certain aspects of Hayek's social thought, as presented in his great book *The Constitution of Liberty* (1960) and his extremely interesting and important work *The Counter-Revolution of Science* (1955).

Much of Hayek's thinking in the field of social theory has revolved around the problem of the kinds and uses of knowledge in society. Although I do not believe he has ever specifically said so, it would not surprising if he had been led to reflect on this by his early interest in the question of the viability of central economic planning, raised in the 1920s by his friend and associate, Ludwig von Mises, and dealt with in the volume edited by Hayek, *Collectivist Economic Planning* (1935), to which Mises and others contributed; in a sense, Hayek's whole social theory may be regarded as a rejoinder to the sociological outlook underlying attempts to practice central economic planning.

In this, Hayek's fundamental thinking is a rejection of what has been called the "Lycurgus myth" of the origin of social institutions, a conception fostered by certain eighteenth-century writers (Rousseau's *Social Contract* has some well-known passages in praise of Lycurgus, and this figure dominates the famous and chilling chapter "Of the Legislator"), and which may be said to be endemic to the human mind. Untutored men appear incapable of conceiving of systems of order, whether in nature or society, as anything but the product of conscious design and the fulfillment of a plan sketched out in advance and put into execution by a governing intelligence. Hence arose myths, universal among primitive peoples and in the earlier stages of civilization, to explain not only the origins of the universe and the diversity of life, but also how the culture's moral code, religion, language, arts and crafts, etc., were all created by a god or superman. In particular, many classical and modern writers found that the institutions of ancient Sparta, which gave the appearance of having been custom-made to generate a certain type of human being (looked on as highly admirable), could only be explained as having been planned by a single great Law-Giver, whom legend knew by the name of Lycurgus. Significantly, many of those who accepted this myth (Plato in ancient times; Rousseau, Mably, and others in the eighteenth century) went on to assert that the only hope for harmony, rationality, and justice in their own societies was that some new Legislator should come forward to undertake a new Grand Design.

This whole conception, Hayek maintains, is not only childishly mistaken, but evades the core problem of the social sciences, which is to determine, as Carl Menger, the founder of the Austrian School, put it, "how it is possible that institutions which serve the common welfare and are most important for its advancement can arise without a common will aiming at their creation." In other words, that a man should propose to himself a certain plan, take the steps necessary for its realization, and then find the plan realized is, in a certain sense, unproblematical, and stands in no special need of explanation. That, on the other hand, a Goethe or a Voltaire should find at his disposal an instrument—the language of a civilized culture—undesigned but almost miraculously suited to his needs; that *money* should come into existence to replace barter, or that conventions and codes of etiquette should arise to facilitate social intercourse, *although no one planned it that way*; that, in general, men, by pursuing their self-interest, further ends which were no part of their intention: these, on reflection, are certainly phenomena that need to be explained.

The myth that one or a few minds can consciously fashion a much more desirable social order than the "haphazard" and "anarchistic" kind heretofore prevailing became immensely more powerful when designing minds could draw upon the success of modern science. By around 1800 the prestige of the natural sciences was enormous, and rightly so. It was then that what Hayek calls "the scientistic hubris" was born. "Scientism," or modern positivism—the illegitimate extension of the methods of natural science to the study of human action—came into being (as Hayek shows) in Paris, in the circles of the Ecole Polytechnique; and Henri de Saint-Simon and his protégés molded it into a comprehensive theory, set forth its political implications, and then set it into motion as a history-shaping force.

Richard Weaver's frequently-cited dictum that "ideas have consequences" (or Keynes' statement that "the ideas of economists and political philosophers... are more powerful than is commonly understood—indeed, the world is ruled by little else") was never truer than of the school of nineteenth-century French positivism. The reader may well be astounded by the claim that the greatest single political and social influence in the world today derives from a source of which he or she may have never even heard—namely Saint-Simon and his followers, es-

pecially Auguste Comte. Yet I believe that Hayek, who deals with the story brilliantly in *The Counter-Revolution of Science,* proves that this is the case. To the Saint-Simonians can be traced: most of the significant socialist arguments against liberalism and capitalism; the notion of central economic planning (which Marx and Engels, by the time they started writing some twenty years later, simply took for granted as the economic organizing principle of the future socialist society—hence their silence on that critical question); the advocacy of rule by a New Class of state-managers, technicians, and intellectuals (who today stand with their feet on the necks of hundreds of millions of working people in the Third World and elsewhere); the idea of the need, in the contemporary world, for a hand-in-glove relationship between big business—especially the banks—and government (curious that the medium of Rockefeller power should have originated in the mind of a French scribbler who was at times so poor that he was on the point of starving to death); and, most particularly, the view that it is the State's affair to transform society in accordance with the "findings" of positivist "social science." That one group of thinkers should at the same time be the authors of the *idées-mères* of *all three* of the present-day world blocs surely marks them as influential almost beyond belief.

The Old Whig Tradition

In sharp distinction to this line of thought, Hayek harkens to a totally different tradition of social theory, one developed particularly by English and Scottish thinkers of the late eighteenth century, such as Adam Smith, David Hume, Adam Ferguson, and Edmund Burke, but already implied in the Whig tradition reaching back to the seventeenth century. This earlier school had come upon the philosopher's stone of social thought: the idea of the spontaneous evolution of social arrangements through a trial and error process over long periods of time. They discovered, as Hayek sums it up, that "our habits and skills, our emotional attitudes, our tools, and our institutions—all are in this sense adaptations to past experience which have grown up by selective elimination of less suitable conduct," and that "the origin of institutions" is to be found "not in contrivance or design, but in the survival of the successful." Our institutions and customs thus condense the sifted results of infinitely more experiences, occurring under vastly more varied circumstances, than any arrangements which a single individual could hit upon. This perspective—couched sometimes in terms of the superiority of the British constitution over the French Revolutionary constitutions, of market forces over State-directed mercantilism, of natural over artificial languages, or of similar contrasts—provided the basis for explaining those elements of social reality which "serve human purposes but are not of human design."

From this viewpoint, it is not surprising that Hayek by no means shares the animus of many other classical liberals and libertarians to traditions and "prejudices." Instead, he observes that people do—and should—trust what is handed down to them. Traditional customs are "the results of the experience of successive generations.... And, once a more efficient tool [for instance] is available, it will be used without our knowing why it is better, or even what the alternatives are." In the nature of things, to insist on clear reasons for inherited arrangements is, first of all, to demand the impossible; and second, to negate at least in great part their value, since it means condemning present generations to repeat that very trial and error process which produced those institutions. "Paradoxical as it may appear," Hayek asserts, "it is probably true that a successful free society will always in a large measure be a tradition-bound society."

We must be very careful, however, to understand what *kind* of traditional arrangements Hayek argues for. The heart of his thesis is that received social institutions must by and large be presumed to contain in coded form more knowledge than a single individual or a few individuals are ever likely to possess, since they are produced by the cooperation over many generations of a very large number of minds. It is crucial to recognize, however, that *to the degree that coercion was involved in the origin and perpetuation of such arrangements, the argument for their superiority falls to the ground.* For, in that case, the minds contributing to the institutions were essentially those of the coercers, and those coerced were used simply as agents and executors of the aims of the first, the potential contributions of their own minds being forestalled by force. To take an example from language: although English and German may be presumed to be superior to, say, *Volapük* (the artificial "language" with which its inventor, Johann M. Schleyer, enriched world civilization in 1879), there would be no such presumption in favor of, for instance, Orwell's "Newspeak" if it were to become current. The reason is that *coerced traditional institutions are also essentially "invented" by only a few.* To think that millions of other minds have also added the results of their experiences is an illusion.

Why Hayek Is Not a Conservative

For this reason, Hayek's emphasis on the value of tradition, on the need for the acceptance of rules whose rationality is not immediately demonstrable, and on the destructiveness of a certain type of "rationalism," is not to be understood as placing him in the same camp with conservatives. In fact, he has been at pains to distinguish his position from theirs, most clearly in the concluding chapter of *The Constitution of Liberty,* which he chose to entitle "Why I Am Not a Conservative." This part of his work merits discussion in some detail.

Hayek introduces this chapter with a pregnant passage from Lord Acton: "At all times sincere friends of freedom have been rare, and its triumphs have been due to minorities, that have prevailed by associating themselves with auxiliaries whose objects often have differed from their own; and this association, which is always dangerous, has sometimes been disastrous, by giving opponents just grounds of opposition." (Hayek has, incidentally, the fine habit of prefacing parts of his books with quotations from authors he loves—especially Tocqueville, Hume, Smith, and Acton—in this way manifesting his continuing effort to interweave his ideas in an organic tradition.)

Conceding that conservative writers have often shown a greater appreciation of the true theory of the growth of workable social institutions than have many liberals, he finds, nonetheless, that "the admiration of the conservatives for free growth generally applies only to the past. They typically lack the courage to welcome the same undesigned change from which new tools of human endeavor will emerge." The classical liberal or, as we would now say, libertarian view (Hayek's term, "Old Whig," one must reluctantly object, is not likely to catch on), is rather "based on courage and confidence, on a preparedness to let change run its course even if we cannot predict where it will lead." Hayek here is echoing Benjamin Constant, the great French liberal, who in 1814 wrote what to me seems like the final, wisest judgment on the question of "tradition" vs. "progress": "Remain faithful to justice, which is of every age; respect freedom, which prepares all good things; consent to the fact that many things will develop without you; and confide to the past its own defense and to the future its own accomplishment." The issue, in other words, is *not* one of "tradition" against "progress" (or for or against "change," as people foolishly say), but of freedom against *both* coerced traditionalism *and* coerced innovation.

The similarities between conservatism and socialism are pointed out by Hayek (this is an old story, but a highly interesting and important one: its full presentation would involve outlining the influence of theocratic conservatives like de Maistre and Bonald on the Saint-Simonians, and the attack by the British romantic conservatives on the new industrial system, as well as such later developments as "Tory democracy"). Since "it can probably be said that the conservative does not object to coercion or arbitrary power so long as it is used for what he regards as the right purposes," we have a striking likeness to the socialist, for both are "less concerned with the problem of how the powers of government should be limited than with that of who wields them," both regarding themselves "as entitled to force the value[s they hold] on other people."

This inner bond between conservatism

and socialism may be less visible in the United States than elsewhere, since here those who call themselves "conservatives" sometimes share the libertarian position on economic questions (although even this is often not the case: witness, for instance, subsidy-crazed Southern Democrat members of Congress, who are termed "conservatives," one supposes, in virtue of their abiding faith in bloated defense budgets and their authoritarian "social" views). But the underlying critical difference between the two other positions and the libertarian one, even within the American context, becomes evident when the issue of morality and law arises. As Hayek puts it: "I sometimes feel that the most conspicuous attribute of liberalism that distinguishes it as much from conservatism as from socialism is the view that moral beliefs concerning matters of conduct which do not directly interfere with the protected sphere of other persons do not justify coercion." Most conservatives, for example, show no concern for the victims of the four hundred thousand arrests in the United States last year on charges involving marijuana. The use of such a drug is a perfect example of a social institution which conservatives are not permitting to develop freely and spontaneously. That a few conservative writers are belatedly coming to the conclusion that marijuana ought to be "decriminalized" (to them it's important to keep the stigma attached) does not invalidate the point, but, on the contrary, confirms it, since it shows that freedom of drug use was never implied in whatever principles they may be said to have (as it assuredly is in libertarian principles).

In reflecting on the role of tradition, Mises once wrote: "History looks backward into the past, but the lesson it teaches concerns things to come. It does not teach indolent quietism; it rouses man to emulate the deeds of earlier generations." That is to say, what is now (valued) tradition was once free innovation and the fruit of the innovating mind. Why then draw the line at an arbitrary date and, like frightened and despairing souls, suppose that the best we can do ever after is to shore fragments against our ruins? Hayek is entirely of this spirit (beneath the extraordinary care and subtlety of his writing, excitement at the prospect of exploring and experimenting with new ways of living again and again breaks out in the content; here the style is only part of the man, and one suddenly remembers that this Austrian was also a mountain-climber). Hayek suggests drawing on springs of enthusiasm mostly exploited up to now by the Left. "The main lesson which the true liberal must learn from the success of the socialists is that it was their courage to be Utopian which gained them the support of the intellectuals and thereby an influence on public opinion which is daily making possible what only recently seemed utterly remote," he writes in "The Intellectuals and Socialism," adding: "We must be able to offer a new liberal program which appeals to the imagination. We must make the building of a free society once more an intellectual adventure, a deed of courage. What we lack is a liberal Utopia, a program which seems neither a mere defense of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism, but a truly liberal radicalism...."

It is a large and humbling task and, discouragingly, there do not appear to be many Hayeks in the future. But—why not? After all, we are, as Hayek says, "the party of life, the party that favors free growth and spontaneous evolution." We are the ones who, it happens, have a better understanding than anyone else of systematic freedom, "which prepares all good things" and is—more even than excellence or love—the meaning and heart of human existence. We really *do* have a world to win.

By the way, *The Constitution of Liberty*, the high-point in a life of earnest and rather powerful thought, is dedicated: "To the unknown civilization that is growing in America." □

Book Review/Peter J. Rusthoven

Vietnam: Setting the Record Straight

In the past several weeks, the war in Vietnam has surfaced, once again, as a major item on the evening news. In a sense, this is quite surprising, for if there is one topic which both the media and the American public would rather ignore, Vietnam is surely it. Yet, like a sore that will not heal, the conflict in Southeast Asia refuses to go away; and so each night, sandwiched between vignettes on our impending economic collapse and the latest Watergate trial, we hear of it once again. The Communists, having taken such respite as they deem sufficient from the ceasefire, are actively re-engaged in the attempt to conquer the South. The United States Senate, in the meantime, debates whether even continued monetary support represents too great a commitment to our beleaguered SEATO ally. And in a related incident reminiscent of the late 1960s, a radical "underground" group has bombed the State Department to articulate its disapproval of American policy in Indochina.

Irritating as these reminders may be to those who would have the United States wash its hands of all responsibility and concern for the fate of South Vietnam, one can be sure that such individuals will have little trouble harmonizing these latest developments with the prevailing dogma on "the lessons of Vietnam." It is doctrine that American military involvement in Southeast Asia was the most tragic mistake of United States foreign policy in the postwar era, the *reductio ad absurdum* of a simplistic and rigidly anti-

Peace Is Not at Hand

by Sir Robert Thompson
David McKay $7.95

Communist cold-war ideology. It cost untold billions of dollars and the lives of fifty thousand American soldiers. It "alienated" and "disillusioned" millions of young people who learned that theirs was a government of secrecy and deception, given to the mindless, atrocious bombing of innocent peasants. All of this was done to support a corrupt, dictatorial regime against the otherwise irresistible force of a popular revolutionary movement which represented the legitimate aspirations of the Vietnamese people. Only after years of such idiocy did America finally realize that its clumsy, heavy-handed intervention could not succeed, that the war was "unwinnable," that we could not and should not impose our parochial ideals of "freedom" and self-government on a populace whose cultural heritage left them totally uninterested in the airy abstractions of democratic political theory. Only then, in a transparent effort to save face, did the United States negotiate a settlement, and withdraw from Vietnam to ponder the weighty, oft-proclaimed lesson that "America cannot be the world's policeman." And only the eventual fall of South Vietnam to the Communists (which, it is said with confidence, must surely occur now that American fighting men are no longer there to prop up the regime) remains to close out this sordid chapter in American history.

So runs the litany of "enlightened appraisal" of our Vietnam experience. It is now accepted, almost without question, by large majorities in Congress, the press, and academia. In a few years (if this is not already happening) it will be taught to a generation of high school students as "history." And in time, one supposes, it will no longer be subject to

serious challenge. This will happen not because the viewpoint expressed is correct or especially perceptive—it is neither—but merely because America's intellectual community almost totally subscribes to it and will brook no dissent, while the rest of the country no longer wants to hear or think about Vietnam at all.

In this atmosphere, Sir Robert Thompson's *Peace Is Not at Hand* is an important, frustrating, and deeply disturbing book. It is important because it demonstrates, in detailed, articulate, and documented fashion, that the standard view of Vietnam is simply false. It is frustrating because one realizes that most people will completely ignore the book,* and that those who read it will make little headway in combatting the current complacent majority view. And it is disturbing both in its eminently plausible analysis of the deleterious effects of Vietnam on America's strategic position, and for the necessary implications of that analysis about the ability of the United States to think and act with either seriousness or courage in a post-Vietnam world.

A large portion of *Peace Is Not at Hand* is devoted to a careful, virtually point-by-point refutation of the now standard assertions about the war in Indochina. Thompson, a British military expert who is intimately and personally acquainted with Southeast Asia, is particularly at home in this task. Even without attempting an exhaustive recapitulation of his arguments, it rapidly becomes apparent that his comment about the "abysmal ignorance" which marked Western attitudes towards the conflict is an understatement. Indeed, on the level of specific charges and allegations, one is led to doubt the intellectual integrity of many of those who reported to the American people on Vietnam.

Throughout the latter period of the war, for example, a great deal was made of "American atrocities," such as the incident at My Lai, or the occasional civilian casualties that resulted from the bombing of North Vietnam. Thompson readily concedes, of course, that these things occurred, but he points out something which should have been apparent to any observer but was in fact seldom mentioned, much less emphasized—namely, that My Lai was indeed an "incident," an "aberration," that civilian casualties were indeed both occasional and unintentional, and moreover, that both paled in significance next to the deliberate, continual infliction of civilian casualties by the North and the Vietcong as an element of calculated strategy. Only a few examples are necessary to demonstrate the point. Item: At Hue, in 1968, the Communists systematically executed fifty-seven hundred civilians (captured documents subsequently revealed, says Thompson, "much gloating" over these figures, qualified only by disappointment that more had not been killed). Item: After the battle of Quang Tri, the North Vietnamese killed or wounded twenty thousand civilians when they fired shells from 130mm Russian guns at the columns of refugees fleeing from the area. Item: In contrast to the American bombing of Hanoi, which was at some pains, using highly sophisticated missile technology, to zero in on military targets, the Communists at numerous times throughout the war indiscriminately fired rockets into the Saigon and Phnom Penh areas—with the result that the Communist attacks, though using weapons of much smaller explosive yield, resulted in much higher numbers of civilian casualties. And yet some reporters, as Thompson notes, would go on record as saying that there was no verifiable evidence of atrocities committed by the North or the VC against women and children. Thompson is content to reply by quoting from Alexander Solzhenitsyn: "The proven brutal mass murders in Hue are only noted in passing, almost immediately pardoned, because society's sympathy inclined to that view point, [sic] and no one wanted to go against this inertia. It was nothing short of scandalous that these accounts leaked out in the free press and for a [very short] time caused [precious little] embarrassment to the frenetic defenders of that social system."

Great American Series

I am sick and tired of seeing Indochinese men, women, and children being slaughtered by American guns with American ammunition.

—Senator Mike Mansfield
March 1975

Thompson similarly takes on the frequent allegations that up to two hundred thousand "political prisoners" were being held by South Vietnam. First, he points out that the highest total of all prisoners (save some twenty-seven thousand prisoners of war) held at any time from 1968 through 1972 was slightly under forty thousand. Moreover, of these, nearly half were "normal" criminal element (whose numbers, as a percentage of population, compared favorably with that of the state of Massachusetts), leaving the total number being held for investigation or for specific acts of terrorism at around twenty thousand—about 0.12 percent of a population of nineteen million.

As a final illustration, consider the famed brouhaha over the "tiger cages." The clear impression left by American media coverage was that these cages were part of an extensive, brutal penal system, in which men were literally treated like animals. After all, one only had to look at the pictures. In fact, the cages were merely a small disciplinary unit of an island penal colony (Con Son) where the vast majority of prisoners were kept busy at public works projects, while being allowed their own gardens, their own farm animals, and in general, relatively great freedom of movement. The cage-like construction was mainly to allow for greater ventilation in the tropical climate. Indeed, the cages were not even underground, despite the suggestion to the contrary one received from the staged photographs that appeared in publications like *Life* magazine. Ironically, the furor resulted in substitution of American-type prison cells, which, Thompson notes, turned out to be "ovens" for their inhabitants. Meanwhile, the "tiger cages" were "taken over by militia families as the coolest accommodation on the island!"

I have devoted some time to these specific examples of Thompson's refutation of standard assertions about the war for two reasons: first, to show point out how untrustworthy and undocumented such assertions are; and second, to illustrate that Thompson is both knowledgeable and adept at the patient and difficult task of taking on such widely and erroneously believed allegations one at a time to set the record straight. Far more significant, however, are his analyses of both the political situation in South Vietnam, and the military position of the North at the time of the ceasefire.

The former is generally and confidently reported as being a virtual dictatorship, characterized by little popular support and much (ruthlessly suppressed) internal opposition, tottering at the brink of collapse, and held up solely by American money and weapons. President Thieu is alternately described as a buffoon and a martinet. Again, however, the facts belie such "observations." Thompson carefully goes through the figures for every election of significance in South Vietnam since 1966—figures which reveal surprising popular support for the current administration, and more importantly, surprising commitment on the part of the South Vietnamese to the supposedly "alien" idea of democratic self-government. For example, in the 1971 elections to the Lower House, 1,239 candidates of all parties ran for 159 seats. Despite a necessarily long and complicated ballot, over five and a half million voters (out of seven million registered) voted in a non-presidential election. The result was the election of some eighty to ninety government supporters, fifty-five to sixty opposition candidates, and about ten to fifteen independents. All this in what is claimed to be a "dictatorship." As Thompson notes, "The honesty of this election was never questioned but received little coverage." On President Thieu personally, one might consider the comment of a leading opposition senator that he (the senator) would prefer Thieu, even if he "became" (note the tense) a dictator, to takeover by the North. Finally, it is worth noting that this "corrupt" regime has *not* perished, though so many were sure it would collapse *post haste* following American withdrawal—this despite the fact that the North is continually violating the Paris agreement by moving more troops into the South, by replacing weapons and material at a pace greater than the "one-for-one" basis allowed by the accord, and by deliberate attack; and despite the fact that American troops are

no longer in the South, and American aid has fallen off to the point that the South is unable to engage in replacement even at the permitted one-for-one level.

On the question of the military situation of the North at the time of the ceasefire, Thompson's documented conclusions are even more startling to one long steeped in American reportage. The supposed popularly based, unbeatable guerilla movement turns out to have been nonexistent at the time of the signing of the ceasefire agreement. Indeed, the Vietcong were at that time a decimated and literally insignificant force (largely because North Vietnam, as revealed by its own documents, had deliberately thrown the VC to the wolves in several major battles to forestall any in-house competition for political supremacy in a conquered South). The last major military campaign before the ceasefire, far from being a "guerilla" effort, was a full-blown and highly conventional invasion in force (much as the current activity, though on a somewhat smaller scale, is purely conventional). And most importantly, that pre-settlement invasion was simply defeated. By the time of the signing in Paris, the invasion itself had completely stalled (due in part to the destruction of bases in Cambodia in the much decried Nixonian "incursion"), and the North's industrial war-making capacity was virtually nil (due mainly to the equally decried Christmas bombing). Why else, Thompson asks those who are skeptical of his military data, would the North suddenly accept peace terms which they had casually and cynically rejected for years? And why else has it taken this long before the invincible North has felt capable of seriously attacking, once again, the supposedly tottering South?

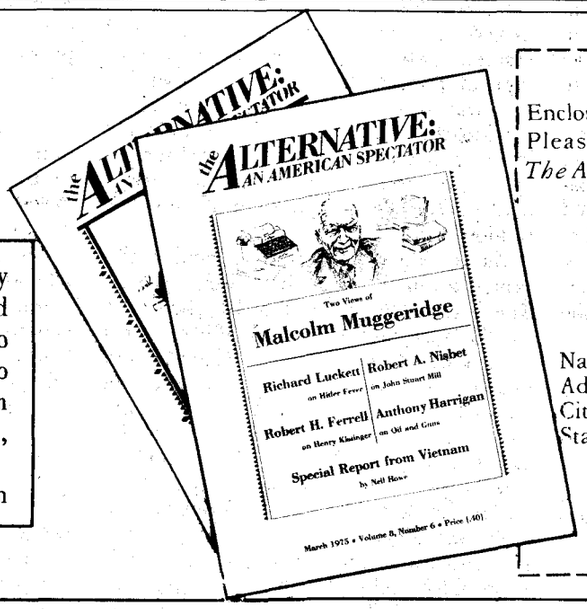
The point of all this, according to Thompson, is not that we were on the verge of "wiping out" the North; such was never our objective. It is rather that North Vietnam was, for the first time, in a "can-lose, can't-win" situation—a predicament which brought them scurrying to the bargaining table. But by this juncture, Hanoi's politically strong position, particularly within the United States, was in striking contrast to its seriously eroded military situation. In Thompson's words, the North had successfully continued to fight "until the American will had been so eroded that the terms of the settlement would not be enforced against the North, and continued American support for the South, after a settlement, would at least be doubtful." In short, the mindset described earlier in this review had, as we are all aware, firmly taken hold. Thus, President Nixon could not exploit the strong bargaining position in which he found himself after the final bombing of the North ceased on December 29, 1972. He was unable to press for withdrawal of North Vietnamese troops from the South, or for a supervisory commission with sufficient authority to police and enforce a settlement adequately. He was forced instead to accept a ceasefire-in-place (allowing the North to cash in on its frantic pre-settlement efforts to *get* in place) and an International Commission of Control and Supervision whose supervisory powers are laughable. He was forced, in other words, by "increased pressure in Congress and the United States to accept a ceasefire on any superficially acceptable terms which would immediately end direct American involvement." And as a result, we obtained not peace, but a two-year lull—during which the North has been able to rebuild its war-making capacity in preparation for precisely the activities in which they are now engaged.

The implications of the ultimate handling of our commitment in Vietnam, as *Peace Is Not at Hand* suggests, go far beyond the immediate results we may witness in Southeast Asia in the foreseeable future (although Thompson successfully debunks as well the rather naive view that the United States should blithely write off the vast territories and populations of that region since it "doesn't affect our interests"). Strategically, the book argues, we have put ourselves in the position where neither the Communists nor our allies have good reason to believe the seriousness of American commitments. The Communists have successfully established, in Thompson's words, "some advantageous ground rules" in their political struggles with the West. First, "Communist countries are off-limits while the rest of the world is a free-for-all." Second, "in a free-for-all, a Communist party (or a Russian ally) has only to win once." And third, "revolutionary parties know they will be supported (by Russia, China, or both) whereas threatened governments and peoples do not know whether they will be supported by the United States." Nor is this an empty exercise in rhetorical speculation—one need look no further than the Middle East to see a situation where all three factors, particularly the last, could easily prove critical in determining what happens to the interests of America and her allies.

Ultimately, the most disturbing feature of Vietnam, and of Thompson's book, is what they say about our national character. Thompson correctly points out that Americans have never really been tested in a situation calling for extreme and painful self-sacrifice—in contrast, for example, to the trials undergone by Great Britain in World War II. His further observation—that "Americans have always shown a desire to duck and have never been slow to find every excuse to do so, particularly if they can satisfy themselves that the main reason is moral"—is, perhaps, overly harsh. But who can blame a European observer for making such a statement? In twelve short years, the cry of the Presidential standard-bearer of America's majority party has changed

The Alternative is a consistently interesting, thoughtful, and lively magazine. It manages to maintain a firm commitment to individualism and freedom without being doctrinaire, boring, or doleful.

—Milton Friedman


the ALTERNATIVE: AN AMERICAN SPECTATOR
Two Views of
Malcolm Muggeridge
Richard Luckett on Hitler Fever
Robert A. Nisbet on John Stuart Mill
Robert H. Ferrell on Henry Kissinger
Anthony Harrigan on Oil and Guns
Special Report from Vietnam
by Neil Howe
March 1975 • Volume 8, Number 6 • Price 1.40

Enclosed is $.....
Please enter a subscription to *The Alternative* for the following term:

1 year $6
2 years $11
3 years $15

Name.....
Address.....
City.....
State..... Zip.....

This is a
☐new ☐renewal
subscription

THE ALTERNATIVE • P.O. Box 877 • Bloomington, Indiana 47401

from "we will pay any price, bear any burden" in defense of freedom to "I will crawl on my knees to Hanoi." Our leading intellectuals loudly dismiss the former statement as naive while ascribing huge measures of moral sensitivity to the author of the latter. More concretely, we are currently watching a treaty ally submit to what can only be described as an aggressive Communist invasion, in cynical disregard of an international agreement to which we are signatory, and it is highly doubtful that we will do anything to aid the resistance. And many of our citizens have persuaded themselves that this is a highly moral and laudable course for us to take. "How mature of us to 'recognize our limitations,' to 'have the courage to admit a mistake and get out,' how moral to eschew all involvement in anything as brutal and barbaric as an actual war." How perfectly fatuous of us to think that such superficial sloganeering represents even a serious approach, much less a correct one, to either Vietnam in particular or the more general strategic choices and commitments we must make in the remainder of this century.

One suspects that the only thing this rhetoric may have succeeded in giving us is that which all too many people (as Bert Gordon tells Eddie Felsen in *The Hustler*) are looking for—an excuse to lose. Moral excuses offer, no doubt, the highest potential for immediate personal gratification. But they are excuses nonetheless. Of course we are not going to "fall to the Communists tomorrow," or any such nonsense. Nor is the rest of the world "ripe" for an immediate "Communist takeover" or anything of the sort. But however silly the doomsday projections of the radical Right, they should not lead the rest of us to lose sight of one fundamental fact: for nations as well as individuals, acts do indeed have consequences. Whatever our current or future rationalizations, America's final policy in Vietnam will prove no exception—as a hundred disturbing possibilities today and thousands more disturbing choices in the future may well attest. In *Peace Is Not at Hand,* Sir Robert Thompson has amply demonstrated that lesson, while giving serious students of American foreign policy an excellent volume of historical exposition and analysis. One may yet hope, if only faintly, that it will find its proper audience in this country.

NOTES

• In this vein, it is interesting to note that according to Thompson's editor at David McKay, this article represents the first public comment on the book despite the fact that copies were sent several months ago to large numbers of potential viewers. □

Brudnoy's Film Index

■ **Abby:** *The Exorcist* in blackface. Poor sweet Abby gets possessed, and is *she* a terror when she's on. Rest easy: the black preacher man saves her from the nasty demon and we all go home happy, all of us except people who like movies done well. Blaxploitation and Exorcistexcess and the most dreadful special effects.

■ **Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore:** Ellen Burstyn (the mother in *Exorcist*) is marvelous in this tragicomedy about a woman suddenly widowed, attempting to structure a new life for herself and her twelve-year-old terror of a son. Hard-hitting dialogue, no softsoaping of the woman's still active sexuality, and some tremendous bits from Alfred Lutter as the kid, plus some nice moments from Kris Kristofferson as the better man in Alice's wide-ranging life.

■ **The Front Page:** The odd couple—Walter Matthau and Jack Lemmon—at it again, this time in a watery version of the splendid 1928 stage play about the tough life of a newspaper. Most of the sparkle has worn away; what's left is a diamond in the rough, very rough.

■ **The Godfather, Part II:** Surpasses the original by a mile, with Al Pacino as the young Don, and Robert De Niro in flashback in the Brando role as Big Daddy on the way up. Over three hours long, but worth it: possibly the best examination of syndicate crime in the contemporary film. For once, a sequel to treasure.

■ **The Internecine Project:** A crumbly thriller all about multiple double-crosses, with James Coburn as head cad. So predictable you'll doze off midway through. Some nice location shots in London—one almost-saving grace.

■ **The Man with the Golden Gun:** Roger Moore once more as 007. James Bond is now after both one Scaramanga, fastest gun on earth—who comes complete with his own tight little island and a midget valet—and a device to solve the energy problem. Tepid Bond, with Moore taking on the appearance by now of a plaster cast of himself. For Bond groupies only.

■ **The Memory of Us:** A cloying excursion into, yes, yet again, the woman seeking liberation. This one is strictly for the handkerchief set. With Ellen Geer, Will Geer, and some of the shiftiest gears in town.

■ **Murder on the Orient Express:** A superlative Agatha Christie thriller now magnificently filmed, starring everybody including Ingrid Bergman cast against type as a drab Swedish religious fanatic and Albert Finney as the irrepressible Belgian detective, Poirot. With Lauren Bacall as Mrs. American Chatterbox, Richard Widmark as the corpse, Tony Perkins as a flaky secretary, Wendy Hiller as a superannuated Russian princess, and on and on. The victim dies of multiple stab wounds, but his train compartment is locked from within. Whodunnit? You'll never guess. A giddy romp, and a train so lovely that you'll know what we've lost in rail transportation since the 1930s. Amtrak indeed.

■ **Paperback Hero:** Well, they make films in Canada too. Jolly. This one wanders all over the macho landscape, makes a fetish out of plaintalk, and utterly wastes the talents of Keir Dullea and Elizabeth Ashley as the hero and his barmaid groupie. The best scenes are at the village hockey game, and they're dull too.

■ **The Prisoner of Second Avenue:** Neil Simon's hit play transposed to the screen in a fitfully funny but generally tepid version starring Jack Lemmon and Anne Bancroft as urbanites under the influence of urbanity. Marvin Hamlisch music and some clever double-takes can't really save this. It isn't broad enough to be funny, but it's too broad to be wry.

■ **Report to the Commissioner:** This year's *Serpico*—the honest, idealistic cop confronting, ho-hum, the entrenched System. Along the way, two harrowing chases, some unusually frank racial talk—a wise Negro cop instructs our innocent hero in the realities of black street crime—and idiosyncratic performances by Michael Moriarty (who thinks he's the young Brando, with marbles in his jaw), and Yaphet Kotto as the Afro-American pig. Troublesome in its simplism, but taut, in spots.

■ **Stardust:** A tremendously moving film detailing a rock group's rise, stardom, and decline, with David Essex as the lead, and some excellent pop music from the '60s and '70s, plus an original score for the fictional "Stray Cats" group. Not overplayed or moralistic or antagonistic, just a splendid bloodletting-cum-social commentary.

■ **Stavisky:** Alain Resnais' languid, soporific retelling of the true story of an early twentieth-century con man in France, and his frightening influence on 1930s international relations. With Jean-Paul Belmondo as the charming bounder, and Charles Boyer as the ever-dapper Baron Raoul. Anti-Semitism, elitism, snobbism, the works. But *dull.* □

Book Review/Kim Benston

Sought by The Whale

The chronological divisions which critics have used to define movements and trends in black literature (the twenties are referred to as the "Harlem Renaissance"; the thirties and early forties as the "protest" era; and the period after World War II as the nebulous "modern" period) obscure the continuity and thematic unity which have characterized much of this literature, particularly fiction, during a large portion of its history. From William Wells Brown to Ismael Reed, black writers have dealt with a plethora of themes touching upon the problem of black survival in America: passing for white, the struggle for economic security and status, the South as a spiritual homeland, the weight of the black matriarchy upon black "manhood," the conflict between education and "feeling" as the touchstone of value, the exoticism of both rural and urban black people. Moreover, black literature, like Ralph Ellison's character Rinehart, has been guilefully Protean: having lived so long with the chaos of American experience it has learned to wear many faces, to adopt roles and methods consonant with such visions of reality as Paul Laurence Dunbar's and Ed Bullins'. The reader of black literature thus often finds himself wondering: what is at the *core* of this fiction? Given the almost overwhelming diversity of its motifs and themes, anyone attempting one comprehensive description of black fiction must take care to avoid useless vagueness and to allow particular writers their distinctive character. Roger Rosenblatt's *Black Fiction* is therefore a remarkable achievement in offering both a truly thoughtful theory of black literature and brilliant interpretations of individual works.

Rosenblatt's thesis proceeds from his sound observation that black fiction has most consistently concerned itself with "the search for a grounding or cultural history." Believing that the essential mythology for the black writer derives from the unrelenting cruelty to which his community has been subjected, Rosenblatt argues that the "grounding" of black fiction is an ironic, cyclic view of history. The typical hero in this literature "seeks to oppose the direction of a historical cycle when he is in fact reinforcing it," and his attempt to transcend the harshness of his experience, however clear his vision or energetic his effort, is ultimately rebuffed. Whether the dream animating his quest for freedom is Christianity, education, love, primitivism, migration north to the "promised land," or existential gesture, the inexorable power of the omnipresent white world throws him back upon the ash-heap from which he sought escape. For instance, Bigger Thomas (protagonist of Richard Wright's *Native Son*) states that "what I killed for must've been good"; yet Bigger's murder of Mary Dalton brings him the destructive wrath of society as well as self-definition, and his assertion is, in Rosenblatt's words, "the proclamation of a man who has discovered [that he]... is hell, a hell within a maze of hells around him." The hopeful method of release becomes the vehicle of failure as the hero's originally inspiring ideal becomes a mockery to his destiny.

Rosenblatt thus interprets black fiction as a tragic literature in which black characters are doomed by the inescapable reality of external forces. Because these heroes usually begin hopeful of their subjective powers of creation but eventually see themselves as objects molded by brutal hands, their world finally appears "backward and upside down, [where] hate destroys the hater, and love destroys the lover just as surely." Consequently, as Rosenblatt perceptively notes, its dominant patterns are based on inversions, demonic parodies, and ironic reversals. The characters' beliefs that they control their own destinies is undermined in the end; in Rosenblatt's elegant phrase (which reverses the formula of Ahab's tragiheroic quest for Moby Dick), "most of the time, The Whale seeks them."

Black Fiction

by Roger Rosenblatt
Harvard $8.50

These basic ideas constitute the critical apparatus with which Rosenblatt explicates some sixteen major works, from Zora Neale Hurston's much-neglected *Their Eyes Were Watching God* to Ralph Ellison's classic *Invisible Man.* All of these discussions are solid and provocative, and both casual readers and scholars of black literature will benefit from Rosenblatt's lucidly written analyses. The examination of James Baldwin's *Go Tell It on the Mountain* is an especially fine product of Rosenblatt's guiding thesis and gift for acute textual reading. While the standard interpretation sees Baldwin depicting young John Grimes' spiritual transformation within the Church's framework, Rosenblatt draws upon his considerable knowledge of the Bible to show that the "Word" John hears is not divine but that of a "malicious voice which advertises humility as a virtue when it means humiliation." Although religion would seem to offer a redemptive alternative to historical cycles, Rosenblatt shows that the language of Christianity holds opposite meanings for black than for white. His readings of Baldwin's *Another Country,* Jean Toomer's *Cane,* and Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land* lead to the general conclusion that "wherever Christian devotion is expressed, it is almost always repudiated with authority."

Rosenblatt treats other pervasive and well-known themes of black fiction with similar acumen. Particularly noteworthy is his chapter on humor. Lanston Hughes' superb character Simple (protagonist of many books and newspaper columns) is described as a man of Falstaffian wit and lovability who pits quick, irreverent satire against a variety of life's insanities and inanities. Rosenblatt is attuned to Hughes' technical dexterity in the Simple collections, but his description of Simple's character illustrates an even deeper critical sensitivity: "he was the free man, the generous Joseph, the stumbler who admitted his mistakes, the survivor and the dreamer."

Curiously, however, Rosenblatt chooses to emphasize the condition to which Simple responds rather than the quality of this survivor's response: "in the end we only really care about the inescapability of what was left behind." This stress upon the external world's presence sometimes leads Rosenblatt to overlook the character's subtle adjustments to inescapable reality. A case in point is his reading of Ellison's *Invisible Man.* Rosenblatt argues that, in the typical manner of black characters, the protagonist's quest leads him from "illusion" to "nihilism." Certainly an abstract overview of the novel reveals a movement from one type of nothingness to another. Yet, contra Rosenblatt, the end is not a falling back to "nihilism"; although invisible and degraded with respect to white society, the hero gains a deeper return to communal roots, initiating a true advance. The blues pattern informing the novel provides a way for individual and group to be joined into a mutually supporting relationship. This pattern is suggested with increasing intensity throughout the story each time the hero is confronted with a symbol of his roots. So, his educative journey leads not to original illusions but to a more fundamental, and sustaining, communal tradition. Therefore, although Ellison has employed the basic cyclic pattern which Rosenblatt identifies in black fiction, it leaves the invisible man at a new beginning and not a doomful end.

Just as Rosenblatt overlooks the uses of "blues" response in *Invisible Man,* so, perhaps, he has missed something of the blues sensibility which informs black fiction. The agony of black existence, which Rosenblatt believes this fiction ultimately

emphasizes, certainly should never be forgotten or diluted. But in addition to proclaiming the realities of that agony, black writers have declared that it is also a joy to be black. From Hurston's Janie and Hughes' Simple to Baldwin's John and Ellison's nameless hero, black characters have exhibited that mixture of suffering and celebration which is what being black, American, and human is all about. Sought by The Whale, the black character often winds up singing the *tragicomic* blues, thereby wrenching from his aching life a lyric, if not transcendent, meaning.

Still, Rosenblatt's sophisticated theory of cyclic patterns illuminates the intricacies of many black novels and demonstrates an elemental commonality among these works. In the middle of *Black Fiction* he eloquently poses the central question of both his book and black literature: "How does a people needing and seeking a past find one in a country which denies the value of the past?" This problem, as Rosenblatt says, "perpetuates the cycles of black fiction." The refusal to escape from history and heritage, the continued recital of the litany of abuse, can be a valuable lesson for America as a whole. We are all, black and white, heirs to the human past which Eldridge Cleaver called "an omniscient mirror," a complex mingling of good and evil. As Roger Rosenblatt teaches in *Black Fiction*, none of us can deny that heritage, not even the heroes and dreamers which black writers have given us. □

Book Review/Terry Krieger

Having What We Want

On the page that precedes the title page and that contains a list of books by Donald Barthelme, and on the inside of the book jacket at the front of the book, *Guilty Pleasures* is characterized as Barthelme's first "non-fiction" book. But the pieces in this book are no more examples of "non-fiction," and they are no less creations of Barthelme's extraordinary imagination, than his other works. The emergence of new literary forms such as "the new journalism," the transformation of old literary forms such as the novel and the short story, and the bizarre nature of modern American popular culture, a culture in which "fiction" often seems to be inadequate reportage and "non-fiction" often seems to be a running account of conceits and nightmares—all these phenomena frequently render the distinction between "fiction" and "non-fiction" unsatisfactory. Barthelme himself does not characterize the pieces collected in *Guilty Pleasures* as "non-fiction"; in the preface to the book, he characterizes them as "parodies," "political satire directed against a particular Administration" (guess whose), "brokeback fables," "bastard reportage" (which I take to be the phrase Barthelme uses to designate and depreciate "the new journalism"), and "pretexts for the pleasure of cutting up and pasting together pictures." If that's "non-fiction," what isn't?

Perhaps one reason why Barthelme characterizes "the new journalism" as "bastard reportage" is that he does not excel at it. Barthelme is better at taking off from an event, situation, or phenomenon than staying with it. And that's all right, for not all writers need to or should mind the store.

One of Barthelme's pieces of "bastard reportage" is a description of an Ed Sullivan show. The piece has a telegraphic style that reminds me of D. Keith Mano's pieces in *National Review*. I would let it go at that if it were not for a particular passage in the piece.

Barthelme is describing the appearance of Ed Ames on the Sullivan show. Ames is singing a "sublovely" song in a "very comfortable, easy" way. "Ames closes his eyes, sings something something something; the song is submemorable." Then Barthelme parenthetically remarks: "Something memorable: early on Sunday morning a pornographic exhibition appeared mysteriously for eight minutes on television station KPLM, Palm Springs, California. A naked man and woman did vile and imaginative things to each other for that length of time, then disappeared into the history of electricity. Unfortunately, the exhibition wasn't on the network. What we really want in this world, we can't have.

Guilty Pleasures

by Donald Barthelme
Farrar, Straus and Giroux $7.95

Here as elsewhere in *Guilty Pleasures* and in his other works, Barthelme's attitude is playful and his tone is ironic. Does Barthelme actually believe that what the naked man and woman did to each other was "vile"? That what they did to each other was "imaginative"? That it was unfortunate that it wasn't on a network? I don't know. But I do know that Barthelme's attitude is serious as well as playful and that his tone is sober as well as ironic. For Barthelme, Ames' song *is* "submemorable" and the "pornographic exhibition" *is* "something memorable." Barthelme *does* believe, in fact he *knows*, that "what we really want in this world, we can't have." He knows that, in "this world," which for all of us is the world of modern American popular culture, it is not just that we can't have what we really want; it often is that we don't know what we really want or even who we are. So, in our confusion, despair, or mindlessness, we seek out the guilty pleasures of popular culture. We are guilty over those pleasures not because we know that those pleasures are bad or evil—we know that most of them are not—but because we realize, however imperfectly or incompletely, that we are willing, even eager, to want what popular culture suggests we should want and to be what popular culture suggests we should be.

One type of person that popular culture suggests we should be is an "intelligent and informed buyer of goods and services," a person who takes the *Consumer Bulletin Annual* seriously, who perhaps takes nothing else seriously ("Down the Line with the Annual"). Charles and Candace have taken the *Consumer Bulletin Annual* seriously, but now Charles says: "Let me confess it, I am tense, for this America is not the one I knew. I am going away, to the Australian archipelago, for although my pipe tobacco is of the type judged lowest in lead and arsenic in 1968 by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, there is cyanide in my silver cleaner, and my oranges have been rouged with coal-tar dyes."

Another type of person that popular culture suggests we should be is a liberated woman, a woman who, in the words of an advertisement for *Cosmopolitan* in the *New York Times*, thinks that it's "silly to preserve old clichés when naturalness and freedom are so much better." What happens to such a woman? In Barthelme's parody ("That Cosmopolitan Girl"), she is mistreated by her boyfriend, who finally rejects her in favor of a woman named Elberta. Elberta does not read *Cosmopolitan*; she reads *Scientific American*.

If we don't know what we really want we can take suggestions from popular culture on what we should want. For example, if we don't know what we really want to read, we should read not a novel but a digest of a novel (Barthelme's parody of a digest of Balzac's *Eugénie Grandet* is hilarious). If we, like a middle-level federal bureaucrat who has worked in the Bureau of Hatcheries for twenty-three years, don't know what we really

want to do to achieve recognition, we should talk like the newsweeklies, where there is "a cacophony of crying and warning, and urging" ("Snap Snap"). If we don't know what we really want to study, we should study "Alpha and Theta Brain Wave Training," "Belly Dance," "Divorce Before & After," "Happiness and Freedom," "Love," and "Tap Dancing" at an open university in San Francisco ("Heliotrope"). If we don't know what we really want to do to entertain ourselves, we should go to see an abstruse and tedious foreign film, whose protagonists might be "Marcello, a wealthy film critic who has enriched himself by writing attacks on Akira Kurosawa for the *American Legion Magazine*, and Anna, a lengthy, elegant beauty, blond, whose extreme nervousness is exteriorized in thumb-sucking" ("L'Lapse").

Not all of Barthelme's parodies are so successful. "The Angry Young Man" and "The Teachings of Don B.: A Yankee Way of Knowledge" are somewhat heavy-handed. And Barthelme's letters to the editor of an international art journal ("Letters to the Editore") are less pretentious than the letters to the editor of *Commentary* and less illiterate or crazy than the letters to the editor of the *Boston Herald-American*. As for the political pieces in *Guilty Pleasures*, they seem to be inspired by socialist sentimentality ("The Palace") or antagonism to Richard Nixon and his Administration ("Swallowing," "The Young Visitirs," [*sic*] "The Dragon," "An Hesitation on the Bank of the Delaware," "The Royal Treatment," and "Mr. Foolfarm's Journal"). I find nothing pernicious about sentimentality itself, and I think there are good reasons (but not as many as some persons think) for antagonism to Richard Nixon and his Administration. Still, sentimentality and antagonism apparently do not inspire Barthelme to write as well as he can.

I do not want, however, to dwell on those few pieces in which Barthelme is weak or mediocre, for Barthelme is a strong and distinctive writer. That is clear from the works that preceded *Guilty Pleasures*. That is clear from most of the parodies in *Guilty Pleasures*. It is clear from the pieces in *Guilty Pleasures* that Barthelme characterizes as "pretexts for the pleasure of cutting up and pasting together pictures," particularly "A Nation of Wheels." It also is clear from "Nothing: A Preliminary Account," a wonderful piece in which Barthelme demonstrates the impossibility of nihilism.

"Nothing: A Preliminary Account" is the last piece in *Guilty Pleasures*. Its position may be accidental, but I doubt it. I think that, whether Barthelme intends it or not, the piece serves as a warning not to misinterpret all the pieces that precede it. Barthelme realizes that, in modern American popular culture, we attend to ourselves in ways that diminish us and we extend our collective experience in ways that limit the possibilities of individual experience. But Barthelme does not proceed from there to cynicism or nihilism. He is too intelligent for that; he loves us and our culture too much for that. We would be even bigger fools than we are if we were to believe that, in our culture, we can have innocent joys. But we can have guilty pleasures, and maybe that's enough. □

Book Review/Angelo M. Codevilla

Power to the Populists

Generations of reformers have worked to make the central government of the United States ever more powerful. Only government power, they have thought, can keep the average man from being dwarfed by, and subjected to, the power of giant corporations. Yet after a half century of New Freedoms, New Deals, New Frontiers, et al., reformers are beginning to notice that the object of their cares, "the little man," is more than ever before dependent upon and defenseless against decisions of corporate and governmental bureaucracies; and they are discovering that, worst of all, corporations and government appear to be combining their powers to make "the little man's" life more expensive and less pleasant.

This situation troubles the reformers. Some attribute the unfortunate situation to the corruption of public servants by private money, and so continue to contribute to the increasing power of government by devising ways in which it can guard its flock more closely. But others have begun to doubt whether regulation can ever do right by the "little man," given that government by nature appears ready to lend its power to the strong in society—not to the weak. Thus, now that the federal government has nearly all the powers the political Left has long wanted it to have, a political dialogue between the Right and the Left on the proper function and extent of governmental power may once again be possible.

Simon Lazarus is a young lawyer whose education (Yale Law) and professional life (Nader's Raiders) have firmly attached him to the tradition of upper-class liberal reformers. The book is addressed to his friends, the "genteel populists"—heirs with him to the muckraking, government-regulating traditions of the Wilson and Roosevelt Administrations. By "genteel populists" Lazarus means the complex of foundation executives, public interest lawyers (of whom Ralph Nader has been the most prominent in recent years), and likeminded men in government. They are "populist" because of their concern with the welfare of "the little man," and "genteel" because they belong to social, educational, and professional elite groups. To them he presents the argument that much of what they deplore in America is due to the error of their ways.

The Genteel Populists
by Simon Lazarus
Holt, Rinehart and Winston
$8.95

One of the main achievements of liberal reformers has been far-reaching regulation of the American economy. But the regulatory statutes by which railroads, airlines, farms, broadcasters, etc. were to be placed in the service of the public interest have in effect given some railroads, airlines, farms, broadcasters, etc. a license to impose monopoly conditions and prices upon the public via government coercion. How, for example, does a single tomato get to be priced one dollar at a supermarket? Well, there's something called the "Florida Tomato Committee," a group of twelve tomato growers appointed by the Secretary of Agriculture upon "nomination" by the tomato industry itself—or rather by its most influential members. It "recommends" to the Secretary how he might regulate the size, quality, and quantity of tomatoes grown or imported in the United States. Of course, such regulations ultimately determine price. And when imports from Mexico threaten to lower the price of tomatoes, regulations are tailored to exclude the imports on technical grounds. Likewise the Civil Aeronautics Board has kept the price of airline tickets above market value: the air fare between Los Angeles and San Francisco for airlines uncertified by the CAB is half that of those certified, but an airline can't fly *between* states if it isn't certified. A host of decisions are made in secret sessions with only a few attending. This is the way, for example, that broad-

cast licenses are awarded, that foods and drugs are allowed or banned—the Food and Drug Administration ban on hexachlorophene (in Dial soap) was a coup for Procter and Gamble.

Thanks to the efforts of reformers, the regulatory agencies and executive departments have been able to form very powerful socioeconomic bonds with the sectors of society they are nominally intended to supervise. Within these closed circles, the careers, fortunes, and reputations of men move irrespective of boundaries between the public and private sectors. Such circles are well-nigh unbreakable because just about no one capable of doing the breaking has any interest in doing so. A single conferral of special privilege very seldom affects the whole public dramatically enough to focus a politically significant amount of resentment upon either the politicians offering it or the group receiving it; on the contrary, individual politicians who refuse a group's request stand to lose definite quantities of support and gain definite quantities of opposition.

Such closed circles, Lazarus argues, can only be attacked by a "self-appointed elite" of persons committed to the public interest, persons who are more concerned about the people's interest than the "people" are. He calls this elite of well-born or well-schooled lawyers a "populist vanguard," and chooses the federal court system as its principal tool.

Lazarus' choice of tools gives his enterprise an appearance quite different from that of his fellow reformer Ralph Nader, who spends most of his time trying to get Congress to create more agencies and encouraging existing agencies to issue more rules. Apparently Lazarus has learned more from Naderism than Nader has, for he realizes that some of the latter's pet causes resemble the grand reform pageants of the past and are likely to have similar results. For example, giving the Federal Communications Commission the authority to control the content of TV programs in the public interest would only bring a long line outside the President's door, each person hoping to impose his own views through TV. Second, the proposed consumer protection agency, which would be a sort of regulatory agency set over other regulatory agencies, could be controlled by precisely the same means by which the other agencies are controlled, and would surely be just another obstacle for consumers' suits unsanctioned by the agency to overcome. Third, the proposal for federal chartering of corporations can mean—indeed Emmanuel Celler's original bill so specified—special protection from private suits for corporations so chartered. Incidentally, nationalization of corporations would have the same legal effect.

Why, then, is Nader willing to give agencies and corporations even more power to control their publics—something one must assume he does not like? The leftist reformers who preceded him were willing to accept the power of the regulatory-industrial complex they were establishing as the price that had to be paid to achieve certain worthy goals. Among these was the federal government's own ability to direct an economy which offered its controllers precious few handles; and the easiest way to create interlocutors, economic organizations through which government could act, was to offer leaders of affected groups a voice in regulatory policy. Perhaps more important, New Deal reformers aimed at an entirely different sort of representative democracy from that bequeathed us by the Founding Fathers. They believed that increases in population and in the size of the federal government—equally ineluctable things—had deprived millions of Americans of the experience of participation in public affairs. The National Recovery Act (NRA) meant primarily to expand federal power over the economy and then to delegate the exercise of that power to producers'

groups, in which the widest possible kind of participation would be encouraged. There was nothing haphazard about this. The NRA contained a whole vision of democratic politics in which the administration of things would replace the government of men, and in which socioeconomic units, whose members would be tightly bound together by common interest, would be far more important politically than geographically-defined heterogeneous communities. But though the NRA was declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, an argument could be made that the alphabet agencies combined have a milder effect along similar lines. And although Nader's distaste for the fruits of regulated oligopoly is even greater than that of earlier reformers, a view of politics similar to theirs keeps him in the lobbies of Congress working to create yet another layer of bureaucracy.

Lazarus, on the other hand, proposes no new agencies. Rather, he proposes that the federal courts take on the detailed superintendence of the vast federal regulatory apparatus. No doubt fairer decisions and healthier attitudes really are more likely to come out of public adversary proceedings than out of closets shared by "government experts" and "interested parties." But Lazarus' suggested reforms also fail to address the real problems. The practical difficulties involved in subjecting thousands of administrative, quasi-legislative, and quasi-judicial (the American euphemism for administrative law) decisions to review by the ordinary federal courts are enormous. Moreover, what reason is there to believe judges cannot be "captured," just as quasi-judges have been? Experience teaches that wherever there is power to grant favors worth fortunes, people will line up to influence it, and fight and pay for a place up front. Why should judges be immune to influence? Surely a law school diploma immunizes against neither partiality nor corruption. Lazarus bids us rely on nothing but "the mystique of the courts" and his expectations of judges. But can judges, even with the best of intentions, get into the business of robbing Peter to pay Paul without losing their protective mystique and becoming no more respected, though far less powerful, than Presidents? The Supreme Court's majority in *Colegrove* v. *Green* and Alexander Bickel's argument in *The Supreme Court and the Idea of Progress* point to the incompatibility of social management on the retail level and leadership in the realm of principles. The former uses up the "credit" required for the latter.

One gets the impression that Lazarus is asking the genteel populists to place their bets on the courts not so much because he believes they will work wondrous changes in a bad situation, but rather because the legislative and executive branches have proved their unreliability and there is nowhere else to turn. Believing, like Nader and like New Deal reformers, that "pluralist democracy" if left to itself will produce insufferable inequities, he seeks, as they did, "some additional agency of review, some mechanism for intervention by guardians of the public weal." In fact, he likes the courts as a means because they come closest to being independent of the corrupting influences of what he calls American pluralism. Thus, fundamentally, no less than other reformers, Lazarus wants American government to be organized on a basis other than the popular one upon which the Founding Fathers set it.

Lazarus understands that the American republic is somehow based on self-seeking and recognizes that the Founding Fathers, unlike "postwar liberals," wisely limited government's power to help one selfish interest impair the liberty of another. Nevertheless, Lazarus shares the contemporary view of "pluralism" as a sociopolitical system in which life itself consists of a never-ending contest between organized interest groups, each of which attempts to enlist the government in its effort to extract its living from the hides of all the others. Quite in tune with most of modern political science, he believes in Lasswell's dictum that politics is the process which determines who gets

what. Since this is so, the fewer decisions made according to political criteria, the more made according to "principled" ones, the better, and the more just, society will be.

But the republic was built on quite another view of politics. Of course Madison knew that economic interests would try to capture government, but his design—an extended republic with geographic representation, federalism, separation of powers, and staggered elections—was intended to keep any one interest from succeeding at the expense of the others, and not to surrender to all comers and then judicially allocate the spoils to build a just society. The political system was meant to keep the people away from temptation. For if the government attempts to referee the competitive satisfaction of people's desire to live off one another, it must either be trampled by all parties or be obliged to join one. Besides, how does a population participate in this sort of refereeing—and retain a sense of justice—when injustice itself may be defined as judging in one's own cause? No, the framers of our Constitution did not establish the modern state as France then knew it, and as we have come to know it. The *political* society they founded had a rather restricted set of aims: the preamble of our Constitution limits itself only to those concerns the Christian and classical tradition considers to be political. The government would not attempt to fulfill the function of the head of the household, giving more sustenance to one than to another of its members. Nor would the people, through their political agent, provide themselves with priests, though men do not—or at least did not then in large numbers—live without the Spirit any more than they live without bread or order. People could take part in the government because, among other reasons, politics did not offer them the opportunity to live off one another, or to use others to fulfill their social or religious fancies.

In sum, we see in Simon Lazarus a populist reformer who, while acknowledging that previous accretions of government power over the lives of people has benefited only bureaucracies, is unwilling to contemplate reduction of that power. His proposal, the greatest virtue of which is its modesty, is based on the belief that the further an institution is from popular control, the better. Alas, Mr. Lazarus is ideologically hooked on power, the power to shape society. In Europe this addiction has long permeated whole political cultures—every group fearful of government power, yet unwilling to agree to its diminution in the hope of someday wielding it as the group sees fit. *The Genteel Populists* shows the pitfalls of this "schizophrenic" attitude toward government, which Lazarus apologizes for sharing, and which is the lot of modern democrats. □

The Bootblack Stand

by George Washington Plunkitt

Dr. George Washington Plunkitt, our prize-winning political analyst, is celebrating the publication of his new book, which is now available at avant-garde bookstores throughout New Jersey. Dr. Plunkitt's book is about the importance of altruism in politics and it is titled What's in It for Me? *Although Dr. Plunkitt expects to earn ten million dollars from sales of his new book, he has agreed to continue to advise public figures through this column. Address all correspondence to The Bootblack Stand, c/o* The Alternative.

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

Recently I took a break from my writing and lecturing and spent some time in a federal prison just helping the convicts learn the essentials of good manners, sound bodily hygiene, good grooming, and tennis—things essential for rehabilitation. You see, I am an advocate of the old axiom that if one is good to oneself one will be good to others and thereby a better world will obtain.

Unfortunately, while I was helping others, others helped themselves to my belongings, not only the personal effects I had locked away in my locker but also several books which I had been using in my college lecture series. One was a hard-to-get classic by Dale Carnegie and another did not even belong to me, John Dean's *Simplified Version of the Bible*.

This should put an end to the old myth that the people we enjail are just common criminals. Some of them are as fine as anyone I have worked with in years. These are people who are thirsting for knowledge and yet we just lock them up. On the college lecture circuit I intend to speak out on behalf of prison reform.

—Regards,
Jeb Stuart Magruder

Dear Mr. Magruder:

Hold on. You're jumping the gun, so to speak. After all, how do you know that your belongings were stolen by convicts thirsting for knowledge? They may have been taken by prison guards thirsting for knowledge. I have long suspected that much of the virtue ascribed to prisoners by prison reformers is really the virtue of prison guards. Admittedly prisoners may be uncommonly admirable people whom society has misunderstood but so might prison guards. Prison guards are often just as pathetic as prisoners; they just dress differently.

—GWP

Dear Dr. Plunkitt:

New York's current excitement about law and order has got me thinking about the whole matter of crime, criminals, and the people who are driving these gifted people into infamy—you and me. With crimes like mugging, burglary, and simple manslaughter rising despite the increased expenditure of public moneys to halt this increase, one simple fact seems to elude policy makers. It is that many Americans commit crime because they *like* crime. For them crime is *the good*, and who are we to gainsay minority group values? Not only has our attempt to impose our sense of the good on others proved ineffectual, but it is a kind of moral tyranny that is clearly out of touch with the Declaration of Independence, the Bill of Rights, and the World Food Conference.

Clearly the time has come to take extraordinary measures in dealing with crime. What I am suggesting is that we can, in one swoop, cut down the incidence of crime in America while ridding our democracy of moral repression, by simply decriminalizing crime. This would not be a blanket decriminalizing. Obviously that would not be prudent at this time. Instead I suggest we decriminalize those crimes in which the perpetrator is apprehended and identified as a chronic repeater. Such people clearly adhere to value systems which, though different from the middle-class white system, are nonetheless valid in their own right.

—Cordially,
Barbara Walters

Dear Miss Walters:

Your suggestion appears, at first blush, to be genuinely innovative, but I fear it is only a half measure. I am fetched by those who call for a radical reordering of the system. What this means as I understand it is that we not only decriminalize all crime but that we make illegal those actions that are today considered legal. If you are really serious about changing the system this is the surest route, and from all indications several members of the Democratic Study Group are preparing the legislation even now.

—GWP

The Public Policy

by Adam Meyerson

On Raising the Minimum Wage

At the February convention of the AFL-CIO in Bal Harbour, Florida, President George Meany found time, in between eating steak, riding around in liveried limousines, and otherwise bemoaning the sorry state of our economy, to make a proposal. He called for a rise in the national minimum wage from the present hourly rate of $2.10 ($2.30 as of next year) to $3.00.

There are two significant features in Mr. Meany's proposal. The first is that, by mere virtue of its having been made by the head of our most important labor union, his call is likely to attract considerable attention and support. Ever since Sidney Hillman of the Congress of Industrial Organizations was the prime mover behind the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938, which set the first federal minimum wage at 25 cents an hour, the AFL-CIO has been the chief motivating force in setting minimum-wage policy. Government might not do exactly what the AFL-CIO wishes, but as befits a polity characterized by interest-group pluralism, both a majority of Congressmen and the U.S. Department of Labor are very much influenced by, if not beholden to, the most important of their labor constituents. And accordingly, minimum-wage laws, like most labor policies, substantially reflect the direction, if not the full scope, of AFL-CIO proposals.

The second feature in this latest minimum-wage proposal is that it is a very odd time for Mr. Meany to make it. Unemployment is now the worst it has been since the Depression, it is particularly terrible among black teenagers (36.7%), and, my introductory cheap shot notwithstanding, the AFL-CIO and other unions have performed valuable services in addressing public concern to the seriousness of the problem. The Ford Administration and the Congress think the problem is so serious that they are willing to countenance wildly inflationary budget deficits to alleviate it. Mr. Meany's proposal is therefore odd, because economists tell us that rises in minimum-wage rates and extensions in minimum-wage coverage *increase* unemployment, at least temporarily, and hit marginal workers—old workers, teenagers, and black teenagers in particular—the hardest. Indeed, professional agreement on this point is astonishing: from Paul Samuelson to Milton Friedman to Lloyd Reynolds virtually all economists, except for some in the employ of the AFL-CIO and the Department of Labor, find theoretical basis and empirical evidence for a correlation between unemployment—particularly youth unemployment—and minimum-wage increases.

I repeat, particularly *youth* unemployment. Opponents of minimum-wage laws originally feared they would lead to widespread general unemployment, but there has been little evidence yet to justify this fear. So far, rises in the minimum have tended to affect small percentages of the labor force (ranging recently from 8% to 17%) and have been small enough (usually in the neighborhood of 1% of total payroll costs) that employers could adjust to the new wages without cutting back much employment. Employment has risen every year but one during which the federal minimum wage has been raised—and that one exception was in a recession. Thus, while economists point out that employment would have risen still further in the absence of increased minimums, they are hard pressed to say how much further, and it seems clear the the minimum-wage law has so far been fulfilling its stated intent of maintaining a minimum standard of living for workers "*without substantially curbing* employment or earning power" (my emphasis). Minimum-wage increases may not have unilaterally cured the problems of poverty and they may have plunged some marginal workers into deeper poverty, but, overall, they have helped far more workers and their families than they have hurt.

In this, the continental American experience may be profitably contrasted with that of Puerto Rico. In 1938, prevailing wages on the island were only half the newly-prescribed 25-cent minimum, and the new law drove so many Puerto Ricans out of work that it wreaked absolute havoc on the island economy. The damage was so great that Congress, which is always reluctant to confess error, soon admitted it had made a mistake, and minimums have since been set separately and on a different basis for Puerto Rico. Now the point is that Congress has not similarly had good reason to admit it made a mistake for the rest of America. Increases in the minimum have been minor relative to overall wages, and so long as they remain small we need not fear employment problems even approaching those of Puerto Rico.

Where Congress might have made a mistake, however, is in its persistent refusal to establish a lower minimum wage for teenagers. For there is considerable evidence that continued increases in the minimum wage have priced many teenagers, especially black teenagers, right out of the labor market. Teenagers are generally unskilled and inexperienced, are perceived as being unreliable, and have high turnover rates; employers tend not to want them and therefore not to pay them as much as adults, and for various reasons, including prejudice, black teenagers are desired and paid least of all. Between 1948 and 1968 (a period in which the hourly minimum wage rose from 40 cents to $1.60) teenage unemployment jumped from 9.2% to 12.7% and from 3.2 to 5.5 times the unemployment rate of adults over twenty-five; in the same period nonwhite teenage unemployment jumped from 11.2% to 24.9% and the ratio of black to white unemployment among teenagers went up from 1.3:1 to 2.2:1. To look at these figures alone is to overlook the importance of demographic considerations—substantial teenage unemployment would have occurred even without increases in the minimum because the teenage labor force grew much faster in this period than overall employment (49% vs. 30%)—but Yale Brozen and others have been able to establish unmistakable connections between increases in the minimum and increases in unemployment among teenagers, especially blacks. In perhaps the most sophisticated statistical analysis yet of the subject, a recent Rand Corporation paper by Finis Welch estimated that the cumulative effect of increases in the minimum from 1956 to 1968 reduced the ratio of teenage to adult employment by 15% from what it would have been in the absence of those increases. On the basis of similar evidence, Canada, Japan, and other countries have established separate wage minimums for teenagers which are lower than the standard minimum. The Nixon Administration proposed such a differential minimum for this country, but the measure was steadfastly opposed by the AFL-CIO and defeated in Congress.

The focus of debate on minimum-wage laws has therefore shifted. Very few now question the principle of a minimum, a far cry from half a century ago, when the Supreme Court declared it unconstitu-

tional. Virtually every country in the industrialized world (Germany and Italy are an interesting pair of exceptions) has some form of minimum, and a majority of American businessmen polled recently by the Conference Board favor the principle. In the coming discussion which Mr. Meany's proposal will most likely provoke, the major disagreements will center over the timeliness and size of the increase and the possibility of a differential minimum for teenagers.

Unfortunately, economists can tell us very little about this first question. They can tell us that there is a correlation between increases in the wage minimum and unemployment, and they can tell us that so far little damage has been done, but they cannot predict how many jobs will be lost from any given increase. Nor can they tell us much about the benefits in earning power for any given increase. It would be helpful in choosing an optimum minimum wage if we could compare the total increased earning power of workers who benefit from any given increase with the total loss of income suffered by those workers priced out of the market; but, at present, we have no way of doing this. Congress can select the minimum wage only on the basis of hunches. My hunch about an increase on the order that Mr. Meany has proposed is that it would be dangerous. It would affect far more workers than previous increases, it would come too soon after a 40-cent increase last year, and at a time like this it would seriously aggravate the impact of a recessionary economy on worker layoffs.

As I suggested earlier, economists can contribute much more definitively to our discussion of the second question. Without a doubt, a $3.00 minimum would be disastrous for teenagers unless there were a differential. Such a rise would threaten more than just the teenage unemployment rate. It would deny many teenagers, particularly black teenagers, the work experience they need to acquire skills and habits necessary for their adult work. And the frustration it would engender would accelerate the growing teenage disenchantment with the idea of seeking work. The labor force participation rate of black teenagers not enrolled in school has already plummeted from 78.2% in 1950 to 60.1% in 1972.

Mr. Meany has nevertheless argued strongly against a differential minimum, and to date either his arguments or his clout have swayed Congress. On the one hand, he fears that a differential would shift unemployment from teenagers to older workers, often with dependents, who can less afford it. On the other hand, he contends that a differential would violate a principle sacred to the labor movement—"equal pay for equal work." These arguments overlook the fact that, in employers' eyes, work done by teenagers is often not equal to that done by adults, but there is a germ of truth in Mr. Meany's position. Economists could help us by determining how often teenagers do "adult" work and how many adult workers would be displaced by a teenage differential.

All this discussion of minimum wages is complicated by evidence that many teenagers and some adults are affected much less by official wage minimums than by what Edward Banfield has called "informal minimums." It is likely that many younger workers refuse to take what they consider to be degrading jobs even at wages above the minimum wage, and therefore that much unemployment reflects cultural attitudes far more than wage legislation or even than the strength of the economy. Many available low-wage jobs—e.g., cabdriving or hotel service—go unfilled even with today's dismal employment picture, and the astonishing number of immigrants, legal and illegal, who have found jobs in America despite language and other handicaps suggests that many jobs are here for the takers.

Moreover, minimum-wage legislation cannot properly be considered apart from the overall context of government poverty and welfare programs. A worker earning the minimum wage for an entire year still receives some $700 less than the federal poverty level for a family of four. And although critics point out that the average family has 1.5, not one, wage-earners, and their combined income would be above the poverty level, the argument that the working poor should be favored over those on welfare has always been used to support increases in the minimum, even if some workers are thereby driven to welfare. Conceivably, replacing the minimum wage by a negative income tax with work incentives (such as the ill-fated Family Assistance Plan) would offer the income benefits of current legislation without the setbacks to employment.

But, as is usually the case with public policy decisions, the next minimum-wage debate will take place without an evaluation of the more general policy framework within which it properly fits. The minimum wage will be considered not in the context of an optimum socioeconomic order but on its own. What then can we say about Mr. Meany's proposal? Although we do not know as much as we should on these matters, we can make an educated guess that there is much to be said for an increase like Mr. Meany's at this time—and even more to be said against it, especially without a teenage differential. We can also say that Mr. Meany is more likely than not to get most of his way again. And if he does, when he is eating steak at the next AFL-CIO convention, there is a good chance, other things being equal, that the economy will give him more cause to moan. □

ATTENTION, COLLECTORS!... The Baron offers you your last chance to get a limited-edition, collector's item—the *Spiro Tee Shirt*. Sizes Large and Too Large. Satisfaction guaranteed. Send $5.00 each (ppd.) to The Baron c/o The Sweat/Shop, P.O. Box 145, Woodburn, Indiana 46797. (Indiana residents please add four percent sales tax.)

THE CRISIS
(continued from page 2)

merce Maurice Stans pleaded guilty to five misdemeanor counts and Mr. Fred LaRue, formerly of the Committee to Reelect the President, was sentenced to six months in prison. Oklahoma's former Democratic governor, David Hall, was convicted on four counts of bribery and extortion, and trials began for former Republican Senator Edward Gurney of Florida and former Secretary of the Treasury John Connally. But the good-government crowd is citing the tragic case of Mr. Irving Goldman, New York's one-dollar-a-year Cultural Affairs Commissioner, as proof of the old good-government axiom that insufficient pay for public officials encourages a veritable population explosion of corpora delicti. Toward the end of the month Mr. Goldman was indicted on charges of bribery, conspiracy, grand larceny, and perjury. But then there is this one last story that may indicate the waning of the post-Watergate morality. When it was divulged that Senator Hubert Humphrey may owe as much as $300,000 in back taxes for an improper deduction of his Vice Presidential papers, not a peep was heard from the voices of virtue.

■ As the month adjourned howls were coming out of Washington over the CIA's expenditure of $350 million for a body-snatching expedition in the Pacific. More will be heard about this bizarre extravagance! □

changing your address?

Please attach address label from the back cover of your Alternative in the space below. Print your new address and mail this form to The Alternative. Important: allow six weeks for address change. Always attach address label when writing to us about your subscription.

The Alternative
Circulation Department
P.O. Box 877
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

please attach address label here

☐ Please renew my subscription year. Enclosed is my check for $6.00.

name _____

address _____

city _____

state _____ zip _____

date of change: _____

"Whom the gods destroy, they first make mad." —Euripides

Current Wisdom

BELLES-LETTRES: Mr. Arnold Gingrich, illustrious editor of *Esquire,* engauds the trite:

History has been known to evince a tendency to repeat itself, so the possibility probably ought to be faced that another spin-off might occur, resulting in still another new entity....

—*Esquire*
March 1975

WHAT INTELLECTUALOIDS READ: Intellectual sales pitch of *New Times* magazine, journal of modern urban sophisticates, egghead stenographers, and liberated sales clerks:

Supermen we are not.

But that doesn't mean *New Times* isn't busting evil in the chops, fighting for the little guy, stripping the pants off phonies and generally shaking hell out of the establishment.

Like Mighty Mouse, we are small but powerful feisty. Out of all proportion to our size, we make waves. Strike fear in evil hearts. Give the tremble to fat cats. Shake the rafters. The Mouse that Roars, that's us.

—*New Times* advertisement

GROWING UP ABSURD: The tough-minded *Progressive* reminds its tough-minded readers of the horrors of revolution experienced during the glorious '60s when a handful of idealists defied the Nixonian brutality:

SDS—If you weren't of it, it was just another alphabet-soup newspaper headline; if you were of it, it was home. My daughter and our chapter at the University of Missouri were born almost simultaneously. Parents will recall that when one first brings the baby home from the hospital, it somehow seems unnatural to speak of it by name. You say, "The *baby* did this" or "*he* or *she* did that"—meaning that he or she is too new, not yet real enough, to call by the name you put on the birth certificate. SDS was like that, at Missouri anyway. We simply called it "it" for six months or so. Then it got to be real, and we began to love it.

—*Progressive*
April 1975

ART OF THE SLOB: A Mr. Tom Snyder, currently earning $500,000 a year for his muckraking commentary on NBC news, reveals the intellectual ingredients necessary for the brewing and bottling of a tv genius:

"I do have an ego," he says, "but I'm the best at what I do because I talk good and I think good on my feet."

—*Newsweek*
February 24, 1975

SURPLUS LABOR: The quintessence of ritualistic liberalism, collected from another hollow rumble across the editorial page of the *New Republic,* a Journal of Politics and the Arts—though not necessarily in that order:

The experience of the two decades since the Geneva agreement has made it plain that continued American aid to anti-Communist clients in Vietnam has polarized the situation there, and as a result has prevented the emergence of leaders ready to reconcile differences.

—*New Republic*
January 25, 1975

MELLOW TOSH: The closely-reasoned thesis of Mr. Tom Wicker's new book on the Attica prison rampage served up by Mr. Kurt Vonnegut, Jr., distinguished criminologist and social scientist:

It argues that we must negotiate with the unluckiest members of our society when they turn to collective violence, because they themselves are victims of perpetual violence and because they can make their voices heard only by becoming hideously dangerous themselves.

—*New York Times Book Review*
March 9, 1975

DEPT. OF GIBBERISH: Another careful definition of Affirmative Action, showing once again the deep reverence American bureaucrats have for the American language:

"The affirmative-action program assures that discriminatory acts of the past would not be repeated. It is not a preference system, not a quota—just a device to make certain that people are not discriminated against."

—[Norfolk] *Virginia-Pilot*
February 2, 1975

CONSCIOUSNESS, ARISE: The illustrious *New York Times* reports on the first stirrings of yet another liberation movement whose time has come:

Cleve Backster, the patron of emotion in plants (on the basis of one unduplicated test), now reports finding evidence of feeling in yogurt. He said he had found a trace of jealousy (or pleasedness) between one yogurt container and the next, which had been fed some milk.

—*New York Times*
February 2, 1975

THE AWFUL FIFTIES, REVISITED: A chill of Cold War rhetoric howls from the pages of the incomparable *New Republic*:

Nobody can reasonably deny that a Communist takeover of Vietnam, if that is the alternative to Thieu, would create human hardships. Communist governments are not gentle....

—*New Republic*
January 25, 1975

HOBGOBLIN OF SMALL MINDS: An odd testimonial from the very same people who would save us from such irrefragable hazards and conspiracies as cyclamates, Wheaties, Wonder Bread, Coca Cola, and the horseless carriage:

Out of all of these many studies (and others not reviewed here), a general pattern is beginning to emerge. When a research finding can be readily checked—either by repeating the experiment or by devising a better one—an allegation of adverse marijuana effects is relatively short-lived. No damage is found—and after a time the allegation is dropped (often to be replaced by allegations of some other kind of damage due to marijuana).

—*Consumer Reports*
March 1975

WORDS TO LIVE BY: Another insipid declaration from John Dean, one of the least interesting criminals of all-time:

"Telling the truth is an extremely cleansing, happy way to live."

—*Time*
January 20, 1975

THE USES OF TERROR: Another example of the masterful ratiocinations of *Consumer Reports,* a journal which supports the consumer; it is the producers who must be eliminated:

Cost is often raised in objection to a comprehensive federal plan for national health insurance. But, for the most part, cost, like "socialized medicine," is a scare word.

—*Consumer Reports*
February 1975

EXPERIENCING DEMOCRACY: A book review of Mr. Tom Wicker's recently published outburst tells us about the land of the free, the home of the brave, as perceived by an American St. Francis:

Finally, it is American mediocrity and racism and gun-craziness which Tom Wicker and "Wicker" damn and damn.

We should not be so quick to pass out firearms to the honest yeomanry.

Thus this book signifies.

—*New York Times Book Review*
March 9, 1975

EDITORIAL
(continued from page 4)

developed countries will grow prosperous. The potato will assume its former dignity and the exploitive employees of General Foods will be out of work. But the transcendent benefit is that Americans will walk the planet in the pink of health, experiencing all the good things that nature holds, until that far-off day when they blissfully succumb, are tidied up in compacters, and have smile buttons stamped on their bundles.

There is then throughout all of these rhapsodies to good nutrition, a bassoon sounding the old lilt for Utopia, for life without social discomfort. The horns carry a fortissimo for the most consummate egalitarianism—we shall not only live the same lives but we shall die the same deaths and at the same time! And finally, off toward the wings, one hears the groan of a forlorn bass carrying man's ageless theme of immortality. The most ludicrous themes known to Western man, themes uttered time and again by the leading scoundrels of history, and the intellectualoid has stuffed them all into one dizzy masterpiece.

Actually the quality and merits of these foods are immaterial. With the possible exception of a modest serving of prime grade beef, I am fetched by none of them and cannot even imagine the uses for some. Excessive ingestion of any is doubtless imprudent; but I cannot see how anyone is coerced into gluttony, and I would defend unto death a man's right to be gluttonous. A cursory review of American health trends eloquently testifies to the fact that American nutrition is about as exigent a problem as American affluence or American progress. What is a problem is the plague of fancied fears and crazy ideas that is being spread by our semieducated intellectualoids, driven by their fears and their charlatans.

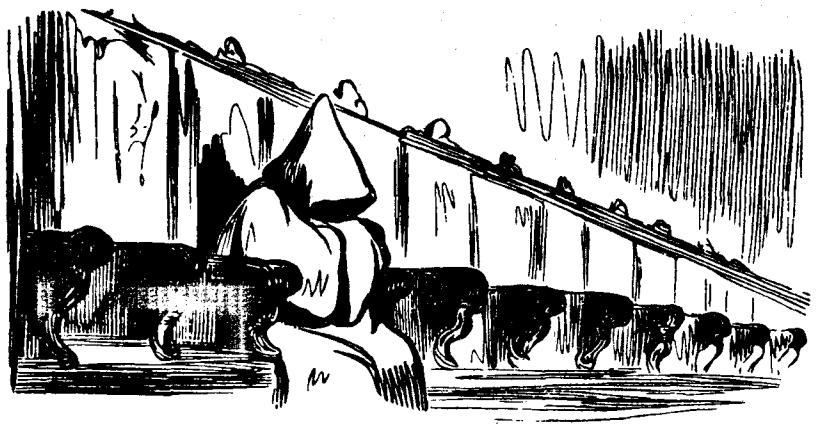
The idea of a standard statistical life is an impudent and pernicious idea. In the hands of a skittish mob it is a threat to freedom. I doubt the wisdom of guzzling large quantities of Coca Cola, but I see no reason to interfere with my fellow countrymen's rights to do so or to produce the stuff. If the consumerist intellectualoids have their way, life in the great republic will be less free and vastly more expensive. In fact the very idea of a standard statistical life is an insult to free men, as should be especially apparent in this age of ethnic pride and free expression. Next we shall hear alarming tales about boozing and brawling on Saturday nights. Mozzarella cheese will be a source of gallstones. And bagels will cause lung cancer.

Humbug. Free men should be allowed to guzzle and to consume what they please, and if they die at an early age what of it? Long life is as overrated as guilt-free sex, and I offer up as final evidence no less an eminence than Dr. Henry P. Van Dusen, seventy-seven, past pope of Union Theological Seminary. This renowned theologian lived a life full of meaning and celebrity. He was a life-long supporter of many intellectualoid causes; nonetheless in January of this year he signed a suicide pact with his eighty-year-old wife and promptly essayed to do himself in. Obviously the standard statistical life has some unforeseen drawbacks.

So, my fellow Americans, lead a gorgeous life. Eat and drink whatever pleases you. Keep the intellectualoids down, wink at the stars, and sip a Coca Cola. Senator Edward M. Kennedy drinks the stuff, and he gives it a little mystery by lacing it with rum. He drank two of these beauties just before driving off a bridge not long ago, and he lived to tell about it. □

There
is opportunity in
America!

SARKES TARZIAN INC.
Bloomington, Indiana



Are you the sort of independent thinker who vanished with the Dark Ages?

If so, *The Alternative* might be just the magazine you have been looking for. You can receive a one-year subscription to this award-winning journal for the reasonable (and as yet uninflated) price of six dollars. You can pocket more pesos by taking out a two- or a three-year subscription, available for eleven dollars and fifteen dollars respectively.

Just clip this handy order form and send it with the appropriate amount of money to: The Alternative, Circulation Department, P. O. Box 877, Bloomington, Indiana 47401, Continental USA.

THE ALTERNATIVE, P.O. Box 877, Bloomington, Indiana 47401

Please enter a ____ new ____ renewal subscription to *The Alternative*:

☐ One year $6 ☐ Two years $11 ☐ Three years $15

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

If this is a gift subscription, please check here ☐ and enclose your name and address.

Changing your address?

Please attach address label from the back cover of your *Alternative* in the space below. Print your new address and mail this form to *The Alternative*. Important: allow six weeks for address change. Always attach address label when writing us about your subscription.

☐Please renew my subscription for one year. Enclosed is my check for $6.00.

Please attach address label here.